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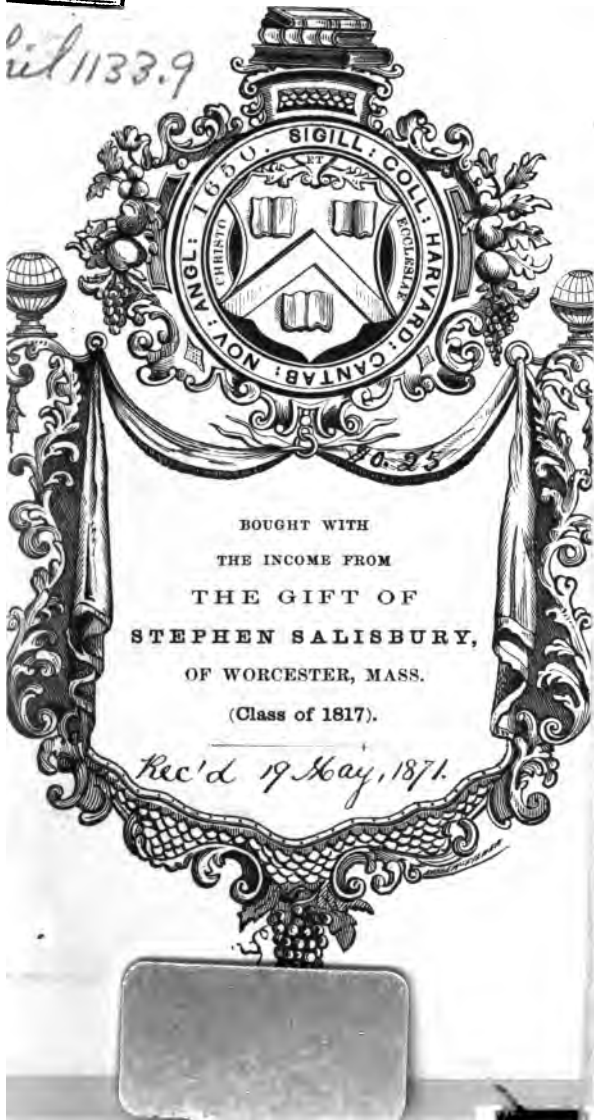
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A BRIEF
VIEW OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY
UP TO THE AGE OF
PERICLES

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Small Books on Great Subjects.



EDITED BY A FEW WELL WISHERS

TO KNOWLEDGE.



Nº. V.



O vitæ philosophia dux! O virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! quid non modo nos, sed omnino vita hominum sine te esse potuisset? Tu urbes peperisti; tu dissipatos homines in societatem vitæ convocasti: tu eos inter se primò domiciliis, deinde conjugis, tum literarum et vocum communione junxisti: tu inventrix legum, tu magistra morum et disciplinæ fuisti. Ad te confugimus: a te opem petimus; tibi nos, ut antea magna ex parte, sic nunc penitus totosque tradimus. Est autem unus dies bene et ex preceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati antependendus. Cujus igitur potius opibus utamur, quam tuis? quæ et vitæ tranquillitatem largita nobis es, et terrorem morti sustulisti.—*Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. v. c. 2.*

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A BRIEF
VIEW OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY
UP TO THE AGE OF
PERICLES.

By Caroline Frances Cornwallis.



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1844.

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INTRODUCTION.

N EARLY three years ago a small volume crept into print entitled "Philosophical Theories and Philosophical Experience by a Pariah." It purported to be, and was, the result of the deep communings with unseen things which suffering had produced in one who believed in a God, and as a consequence of that faith believed that in whatever he *permitted* even, there must be latent good; and, therefore, resolved to seek, and hoped to find it. At that time two only were privy to the publication; the Thinker, and the Friend who edited those thoughts because they were his own also; and who, possessing the sinews of—printing—determined that they should no longer form the mere private solace of one or two.

An unexpected success attended the experiment: the philosophy propounded was approved; its applicability to all the great purposes of life was acknowledged; and, very shortly after, a society was formed for the purpose of editing

more works of the same kind ; in which sound views of science, and great philosophical principles should be clearly and shortly brought forward, for the benefit of those who had neither time nor inclination to seek them in more voluminous works. Since that time three more tracts have been ushered into the world under the auspices of this society :—the Theories have gained publicity in the lecture room of the Royal Institution, and have found favour in the sight both of philosophers and divines. Physiologists of no mean fame have listened and praised ; and among those whom our age looks up to as great in science, many have bestowed so liberal a share of commendation as to outgo the most sanguine hopes of the friends who first associated themselves for a purpose which they thought a good one, but of whose success they were uncertain.

This state of things has put an end to the dual existence of the Pariah, and the Theorist is now but one among many pledged to contribute to the common stock ; and he knows not how he can do so better than by presenting as his quota, a short view of a subject which has hitherto slumbered in ponderous folios and quartos, or in fearful ranges of octavo volumes

clad in one livery, which put a man's reading courage to the test, and justify him in calling himself bold who takes down the first volume. Horace's warning of the danger that whilst avoiding the Scylla, lengthiness, we may fall into the Charybdis, obscurity, will doubtless occur to the *ungentle* reader, for times have changed since worthy authors addressed their intended victims as *gentle*,—the Theorist can only answer to the thought, that he hopes to steer his bark safely between the two. If furthermore, any of these ungentle personages should wonder why so old a subject as Greek philosophy should be brought forward; he answers, that though we owe the chief of our scientific acquirements to the spirit of inquiry which the literature of Greece awoke, when Europe was slumbering in contented darkness; few are aware of how much that literature has done for us; and he wishes to lead his countrymen, and countrywomen too, to do it more justice. The simple monk who complained of the Greek tongue, and especially of "the book called the New Testament," in that language, as a "pestilent invention;"—and the military despot who forbade it to be taught in his schools, knew it better than we do: they feared it; for it is

the language of the free man, whose mind brooks shackles as ill as his body. We who have drunk at its pure fountain, go on our way refreshed, but ungratefully forget whence we obtained the invigorating draught ; and too often imagine that we exalt Christianity by detracting from the merits of the great men of antiquity, "who having not the law, were a law unto themselves;" and who, if the sun of the Gospel had not yet risen upon the earth, at least pointed to its dawning. Clement of Alexandria, whom we must allow to have been a competent judge of such matters, explicitly says, "Philosophy was needful to the Greeks before the coming of the Lord, for the purifying of their lives,* and even now it is useful to piety ; being a kind of rudimentary teaching for those who upon conviction receive the faith." "For," he adds a little farther on, "philosophy to the Greeks, was what the law was to the Hebrews, a school-master to bring men to Christ." †

It is strange that with such testimony before us, and with many of the works of that age in our hands also, we should have been so gene-

* εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. c. 5.

rally led astray by a misunderstood passage or two in the epistles of St. Paul, where he is referring to sophists, and not to philosophers ; and no less grievous is it than strange ; for such misunderstandings make the first steps in ancient lore a dangerous trial. It is a fearful moment when we discover that any part of what we have been taught in our childhood by those we most venerate, is *not true* :—the very foundation of our best hopes is shaken, and it is well if in that frightful wrench of our reason from our affections, we remain calm enough to examine how much we must forego, how much retain. Could we know the private history of most “free-thinkers,” as they termed themselves,—“infidels,” as they have been termed by others,—we should most probably find that the greater number,—as we know has been the case with many,—were made what they were by some such revulsion of feeling as that above described. It is time then that the possibility of any such lamentable results should be prevented, by putting into the hands of all, the means of knowing, and consequently of teaching, the unadulterated TRUTH. The child might thus receive from his mother in his infancy, the rudiments of the knowledge which his after

progress must be grounded upon ; and thus the best years of his life would not be wasted in *unlearning*, when that process is most dangerous, and when there is much hazard that, along with the prejudices of the nursery, the great truths of religion and morality may also be discarded. Science, divine and human, would then stand before him in loving companionship : and what advance would be too great for one whose nature was indeed become what Plato had dreamed long ago ;—a blessed harmony of the seen and the unseen, the intellectual and the corporeal. The age of pious frauds and political humbug is passing away : men, and women too, are beginning to be weary of receiving dogmata upon trust : and if there be, as assuredly there is in this age, much of crude and wild theory, and of contempt for what had before been held in honour, let us at least impute it to its right cause, and meet the evil with its proper remedy. The human soul asks for **THE TRUTH** : let us give it ;—for surely that God who made man for himself, and who **IS TRUTH**, has made that the road to peace and to happiness.

It may be needful here to premise that in order to compress matter that usually has filled large volumes into so small a space, it has been

requisite to omit all the arguments by which the writer has been influenced to choose one account rather than another, where there were conflicting statements. It is the business of an author who writes a compendium of this kind, to exert his own best judgment in the choice of his materials, in order to give the reader a clear notion of the subject he has undertaken to explain; not to weary him by contrasting the discrepancies between ancient authors, and by detailing the reasons why one witness is more credible than another. In many instances the choice of testimony must be founded on a deep study of human nature generally; a subject too large to be here discussed: the writer, therefore, can do no more than ask his reader to have candour enough to believe that he has left no author unexplored that could throw light upon the subject. The results of his reading, his experience in the world, and his contemplations in solitude, are here given, and he conscientiously believes in their general truth; but his judgment, like that of others, is fallible; and those who have the time, will always do well to examine and judge for themselves.



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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

R. C.	
1800	About this time the Israelitish family settle in Egypt, and Greece is peopled by a tribe from Asia, called by the ancient writers, Pelasgi. Argos and Sicyon were the first kingdoms, known as such, in the region thus colonized. The ancient walls and monuments, called Cyclopean, being found where the Pelasgi are said to have settled, were probably their work. Another tribe, the Hellenes, though the weaker of the two at first, gradually gain the supremacy.
1550	They first appear in Phocis, and about Parnassus, under their king Deucalion, spread into Thessaly, and drive out the Pelasgi. The Hellenes consisted of four tribes, Æolians, Ionians, Dorians, and Achaians. The Israelites leave Egypt. Cecrops leads a colony from Sais in Egypt, to Attica; and Cadmus from Phœnicia to Bœotia.
1500	Danaus arrives in Argos from Egypt, and persuades the people to depose their monarch, and receive him in his room. Rameses the Great, or Sesostris, pursues his conquests.
1400	Pelops comes from Mysia to Argos. Minos reigns in Crete, and clears the sea of pirates.
1250	The Argonautic voyage to Colchis. Orpheus flourished about this time.
1225	The seven chiefs besiege Thebes; but it is
1215	only taken by their sons in a second attempt.
1194- 1184	} Trojan war.

B. C.	
1180	The descendants of Hercules endeavour to recover their father's kingdom, by the aid of the Dorians and Ætolians: but the first attempt under Hyllus, the son of Hercules, fails. The grandsons of Hyllus, Telephus and Cresphontes, with Eurysthenes and Procles (the sons of the third brother Aristodemus) succeed in their enterprize. During this time the Ætolians plant colonies, about 1124 B. C. on the coast of Mysia and Caria, and in the island of Lesbos.
1100	By the successful invasion of the Herac- lidaë, Argos, Sparta, Messenia, and Corinth, became Doric; the Achaians being driven out. Elis fell to the Ætolians, the allies of the Dorians. The Achaians fell back on the Ionians, and settled themselves in the part afterwards called Achaia. The Ionians were received by the Athenians, who were of the same race.
	Sparta, during the time it was peopled by the Achaians, was first governed by the princes of the house of Perseus; and then, in consequence of marriage, by Menelaus, of the house of Pelops: but under the Dorians it fell to the lot of Procles and Eurysthenes, whose descendants continued to share the sovereign power; a king being chosen from each family. Agis was the son and successor of Eurysthenes, and the two families were hence called Proclidæ and Agidæ. The distinction between Lacedemonians and Spartans took its rise probably from this conquest: the former were the Achaian cultivators, the latter the Dorian victors.
	The Israelites ask a king, and Saul is chosen.
1068	Codrus saves Athens by his voluntary death

- B. C. | when the Dorians threatened that state. The Archons for life who succeed him, continue from 1068-752.
- | The Ionians under Neleus, the son of Codrus, settle in that part of Asia Minor afterwards called Ionia, and in the islands of Samos and Chios.
- 880 | Lycurgus gives laws to Sparta, and introduces Homer's poems to notice.
- 783- | Spartan wars with Tegea and Argos, and
743 | affairs with Messenia.
- 754 | Rome founded.
- 752 | Archons of Athens limited to ten years magistracy, but still chosen from the family of Codrus.
- 742- | First Messenian war, ended by the taking of
722 | Ithome, and the voluntary death of the Messenian king Aristodemus. The Messenians become tributary to Sparta, giving half the produce of their land to the victors. During this war the college of Ephors was established.
- | Shalmanesar, king of Assyria, carries the ten tribes of Israel into captivity.
- 689 | Gyges, king of Lydia. Flourishing state of the Ionian cities.
- 682 | The ten years archonship abolished in Athens and yearly archons substituted.
- | Aristomenes begins a struggle with Sparta for the recovery of Messenian independence. He is foiled, and Eira is taken, and the Messenians reduced to the condition of Helots.
- 668 |
- 679 | Numa Pompilius, king of Rome.
- 650 | About this period Ardyes, king of Lydia, conquers Priene in Ionia.
- 640 | Thales born.
- 622 | Draco, archon of Athens, publishes his code, Josiah finds the book of the law and enforces its observance.

B.C.	OLYMP.	
610	XLII. 3	Anaximander born ?
598	XLV. 3	Cylon endeavours to seize on the sovereign power at Athens. Jeremiah prophesied about this time. The expiation for the murder of Cylon's adherents made by Epimenides. Solon chosen archon with a charge to revise the laws.
568	LIII. 1	Anaximenes born ?
561	LIV. 4	Tyranny of Peisistratus in Athens. Cyrus, king of Persia, ascends the throne of the Medes also.
560	LV. 1	Peisistratus is driven out.
557	— 4	Sardis taken by Cyrus, Croesus, the king of Lydia, made prisoner, and the kingdom of Lydia added to the Persian dominions.
556	LVI. 1	Peisistratus, having allied himself by marriage with the family of Megacles, is elevated a second time to the tyranny.
552	LVII. 1	He is driven out a second time by Megacles.
548	LVIII. 1	Death of Thales.
540	LX. 1	Phocæa besieged by the troops of Cyrus; the inhabitants ask a truce to deliberate respecting capitulation, and in the interim embark on board their fleet, and abandon the city. They found Elea or Velia in Magna Græcia, and Massilia in Gaul, besides some settlements in Corsica. Pythagoras establishes his school of philosophy in Crotona.
538	— 3	Third elevation of Peisistratus to the tyranny. He reigns till his death.

B.C.	OLYMP.	
536	LXI. 1	Cyrus restores the Jews to their country.
528	LXIII. 1	Death of Peisistratus.
514	LXVI. 3	Hipparchus, the son of Peisistratus slain by Harmodius and Aristogeiton; consequent real tyranny of Hippias: return of the Alcæonidæ, and banishment of Hippias. Cleisthenes, the son of Megacles, augments the number of the council from 400 to 500, and divides the tribes anew, making ten instead of four.
500	LXX. 1	The revolt of the Ionian states. Anaxagoras born.
496	LXXI. 1	Miletus taken by the Persians.
490	LXXII. 3	Battle of Marathon.
486	LXXIII. 3	Aristeides banished from Athens by ostracism.
480	LXXV. 1	Heroic death of Leonidas and his companions at Thermopylæ 6th July. Battle of Salamis 25th September. Anaxagoras comes to Athens this year? aged 20 years.
479	LXXV. 2	Battles of Platæa and Mycæle 25th September.
478	— 3	Repeal of the law of Solon, by which the Thetes were excluded from the government.
477	— 4	The long walls to Piræus built.
469	LXXVII. 4	Socrates born. Themistocles banished by ostracism this year or the following.
468	LXXVIII. 1	Cimon's victories over the Persians.
466	— 3	Themistocles condemned—flies to Persia.
465	— 4	Great earthquake at Sparta, and insurrection of the Helots.

B.C.	OLYMP.	
461	LXXIX. 4	Cimon banished by ostracism. Parmenides flourished about this time, and Zeno Eleates his scholar, who was 25 years his junior.
456	LXXXI. 1	Callias archon. Anaxagoras, then 44, comes to Athens a second time?
451	—	The Decemvirs established at Rome written laws, drawn up by them from those of Athens.
449	LXXXII. 4	Death of Cimon.
446	LXXXIII. 3	Pericles makes a thirty years truce with the Lacedæmonians, public accusation of Anaxagoras, Aspasia and Pheidias. Anaxagoras is banished.
444	LXXXIV. 1	Thucydides, the son of Melesias, Pericles' political rival, banished by ostracism.
441	LXXXVII. 2	Melissus, the pupil of Parmenides, defends Samos ineffectually against the Athenians.
431	LXXXVII. 2	Outbreak of the Peloponnesian war.
430	— 3	Plato born.
429	— 4	Death of Pericles.
428	LXXXVIII. 1	Death of Anaxagoras.



I.

GREECE IN A SEMI-BARBAROUS STATE.

FROM 1800 B. C. TO 1044 B. C.

ABOUT eighteen hundred years before the Christian æra, a barbarous horde, under the guidance of a chief named Inachus, migrated from the coast of Asia Minor to the islands and coasts opposite; which, previous to that time, if we may judge from the exploits which the traditional stories of this people assigned to their heroes,* had been the haunts of wild beasts, which found shelter among rocks and forests as yet untrodden by the foot of man. We are not told the cause of this migration; but as we find indubitable monuments of two

* Hercules, Theseus, and others are celebrated most especially as destroyers of wild beasts. Even Apollo is chiefly famed as an expert archer, and one of his main exploits was the destruction of an enormous serpent.

great empires, even at that early period, the one in Egypt and the other in India—we may perhaps add another also, bordering on the Euphrates,—it is not unreasonable to conclude, that what we have seen occurring, even in our own days in North America, may have happened in this case also. The increasing force and population of a civilized people pressed upon the uncivilized tribes around: and voluntarily, or otherwise, the latter left the more fertile lands to their stronger competitors, and retreated to wilder hunting grounds. It was thus, probably, that the whole of Europe became peopled: the pressure from behind drove the more barbarous tribes farther and farther north, till its most inhospitable regions were at last inhabited; for among the scanty records of our Teutonic ancestors even, we find the tradition of a chief* with his followers arriving from Asia.

At least a century was spent by the Pelasgi† in a state of the wildest barbarism; ignorant, if we may credit their own traditions, of the commonest arts of life, and wandering over the

* Odin.

† This is the name given by Greek writers to the first inhabitants or rather colonizers of the country.

country with no settled habitation ; but by degrees they associated into states, and Sicyon and Argos appear to have been under the government of their respective chiefs before 1500 B. C. Pressed on again by other tribes, the Pelasgi passed over into Italy, into Crete, and into the adjoining islands ; and the four Hellenic families, the Dorians, the Achaians, the Æolians, and the Ionians, spread over the lands they retired from. Colonies, too, from the more civilized countries, from Egypt, from Phœnicia, and from Mysia, fixed themselves in different parts ; and, probably, like other colonists settling among a rude people, carried with them the arts of war as well as of peace, and either by force or persuasion subjugated those whom they found in possession of the country. Cecrops, an Egyptian from Sais, is said to have founded Athens about four generations after the migration of Inachus ; and Cadmus, a Phœnician, not far from that time, founded Thebes in Bœotia. About 1500 B. C. Danaus, another Egyptian, arrived in Argos, but here he found a monarchy established, and a walled town. He was allowed to bring forward his claims to admission before an assembly of the people ; and they, led by what they considered an omen sent by the gods,

were induced to depose the reigning monarch, and receive Danaus in his room.* We cannot tell what the arguments were which the Egyptian prince employed in pleading before the people: we may conjecture that the benefits of superior science were urged, since we find it recorded that Argos having previously been without water, save what fell from the heavens, the daughters of their new king taught the inhabitants the art of digging wells. Four of these wells were in after times held sacred, and received especial honours.† We may guess at the revolution in manners caused by the administration of this monarch, from the circumstance that the appellation of the people was changed from Pelasgi to Danai; a term which we find very frequently applied by Homer to all the Greeks assembled before Ilium.

The situation of Greece, with its numerous islands, soon led the people to undertake maritime and piratical expeditions. That of the Argonauts, from the mythological grandeur with which it has been so carefully invested, would appear to have been either the first or the

* Pausan. l. ii. c. 19, and Eurip. Orest.

† Strabo, lib. viii.

most important. But in those times, the pirate, like the Sea Kings of the Norwegians, was a gentleman ; and no discredit, as Thucydides informs us,* was attached to this mode of conveying away the property of others. The marauding expedition of Jason took place, probably, about 1250 B. C. It was during the times of the Judges of Israel ; a period when the law of *meum* and *tuum* appears to have been very obscure all over the world.

Most chronologers place the Trojan war, celebrated in the Iliad, about 1200 B. C.† At that time the Achaian states, for so Homer terms them, were rude, but yet raised far beyond absolute barbarism. We find bards celebrating the exploits of their heroes ; Sidonian workmanship adorning their vases, and their robes ; and a kind of rough luxury in the courts of their princes, which reminds us of the state of Mexico or Peru, when discovered by Cortez and Pizarro. It matters not whether we consider the Homeric poems as the work of one man, or the lays of different bards collected ; still they must be valid evidence of the state of manners

* Thucyd. lib. i.

† From 1194 to 1184 B. C., Heeren.

about that time, for their geographical correctness shows that they could not have been written any long time after the events took place. In these early ages no maps or books of travels furnished the romancist with the means of giving verisimilitude to his tale; therefore geographical precision could only have been attained by personal knowledge, or the narration of actors in the scenes recorded.

About a hundred years after this, an event occurred which for a time threatened to overcloud the dawning civilization of Achaia. This was the irruption of the Dorians, a mountain tribe, who preserved in their fastnesses much of the rudeness of their forefathers. They were invited to this invasion of the more civilized regions by the descendants of Hercules, who having been expelled by Eurystheus from the countries which they considered theirs by right of inheritance or conquest, took advantage probably of the weakness and disunion among the Achaian states, which followed upon the Trojan war, to urge their claims anew. A first but unsuccessful attempt had been made under the guidance of Hyllus, the son of Hercules, about 1180 B. C.: his descendants, having leagued with the Ætolians also, finally triumphed. Ar-

gos, Sparta, Messenia, and Corinth, fell under the Dorian rule :* the Achaians, driven step by step from their country, fell back upon the Ionians, who occupied the coast nearest to Asia ; and they in their turn, driven on before the advancing tide of invasion, retreated upon Attica, where they were hospitably received by the Athenians, who sprang from the same stock. But the narrow territory of Attica could not long maintain so large an increase of population, and in 1044 B. C. Androclus and Neleus, the

* Probably the dissensions between the aristocratic and popular factions in after times, had the character of a war of caste. The conquering Dorians had usurped the property in the soil ; the conquered Achaians were the cultivators, for them, of lands which were once their own. Thus it was in Lacedæmon where the *Spartans*, i. e. the Dorian conquerors, remained a distinct people from the Lacedæmonian cultivators, who, again, were a step above their former slaves, the Helots, and those who were afterwards reduced to a state of slavery. The contests for political supremacy between the patricians and plebeians of Rome, were probably of the same kind, for the very names of the plebeian consuls sound barbarous and strange among those of the patrician families, as if they were of a different race. We may see a modern illustration of this state of things in Ireland, where the conquered and the conquering people have failed to amalgamate.

sons of that Codrus who by his self-devotion had saved Athens from Dorian conquest, led an Ionian colony back to the coast of Asia Minor: cities were founded,* and the province thus taken possession of, received thenceforth the name of Ionia. The islands of Samos and Chios too, the latter said to have been the residence of Homer, received Ionian colonies.

Thus the civilization which was checked for a time by the conquests of the Dorian hordes, was preserved in the cities of Ionia, and sent back its missionaries, after a time, to achieve a nobler victory—that of arts and philosophy over ignorance and barbarism. From this period the people of Greece may be considered as divided into two great families, the Ionian and the Dorian, in which the others were in great measure absorbed. The Athenians may be looked upon as the representatives of the first; the Spartans of the last.

It would be a wearisome and hopeless labour were I to attempt to trace with any accuracy the

* There were ten Ionian cities, i. e. Phocæa, Erythræ, Clazomene, Teos, Lebedus, Colophon, Ephesus, Priene, Myus, and Miletus. The latter was the nurse of that philosophy which afterwards made Athens famous.

theology or philosophy of these early periods, buried as they are under a mass of allegory and fable, which we have now no means of removing; yet in the very scanty records of those times, there are traces of a purer morality, and a more worthy religious belief than is exhibited in the gross mythology of the Homeric poems.* The date assigned to the migration conducted by Inachus from the Asian shore, coincides very nearly with that of the removal of the Israelitish family into Egypt. At that time the worship prevalent among the Nomade tribes of Asia, if we may judge from the book of Job, seems to have been that of One Almighty Creator, typified by, and already beginning to be confounded with the light, or sun; the rest of the heavenly bodies sharing in the reverence paid to the apparent source of life. Herodotus states that at Dodona he was told that they had

* Herodotus, lib. ii. c. 53, gives it as his opinion that Homer and Hesiod were the *inventors* of the genealogies and names of the gods; and Diogenes Laertius reports that Pythagoras was said to have descended into the infernal regions, and to have there seen Homer and Hesiod suffering various punishments for what they had reported about the gods. Diog. Laert. in vitâ Pythag. lib. viii. §. 21.

formerly sacrificed and prayed to the Deity in general, without giving any name or names to the object of their worship; but that after a long time, the names of the gods were brought them from Egypt. Plato mentions a tradition of one God governing the universe, though generally in so strangely disguised a form that we may fancy that the fate of his master Socrates inspired him with some fear of speaking too plainly.* Aristoteles is more explicit, and avers,† that “it was an ancient saying received by all from their ancestors, that all things exist by and through the power of God who being One was known by many names according to his modes of manifestation.”

The very early division of the more polished nations of India and Egypt into castes, which occasioned a separation of the priesthood from the people, was probably the cause then, as it always has been, of a grosser worship on the part of the latter. The learned sacerdotal caste reserved to itself the more abstruse parts of theology; partly perhaps from a natural desire to keep up the superiority which, however ac-

* Plato, Politicus and Timæus.

† Aristot. de Mundo c. 6, 7.

quired, is always gratifying; and partly, too, from an opinion that the doctrine was too sublime for the comprehension of the ignorant multitude. Then came the plan of teaching the people by symbols which, from their more tangible nature, were likely to impress themselves on the recollection better than abstract truths. The key to these mysterious symbols was in the hands of the priests; and possibly they themselves hardly knew how far the people in general had lost sight of their original meaning. We may turn to times nearer our own for an almost parallel instance: for when the irruption of barbarians into the Roman empire gave the Christian ministers the superiority in learning, they soon were tempted to use it in the same way. Feigned miracles and a more gross and tangible worship were made use of to subjugate or to captivate the minds of the ignorant people about them; for, finding them too rude to be argued into a better faith, they thought that by first obtaining a superstitious reverence, they might finally guide them to better things.* They

* When the pagan Anglo-Saxons were first converted to Christianity, we find Gregory, the Roman bishop, thus writing to the missionaries he had sent into Britain—"And because they (the Saxons) have been used

forgot that when they had loaded religion with ceremonial observances, there was danger that even the priests themselves, at some future time, might possibly become infected with the general superstition, and suffer the substance to escape whilst they were grasping the shadow of truth.

Doubtless the sacerdotal caste of Egypt retained for a considerable time the remembrance of the occult meaning of the symbols they used; and supposed they were preserving the knowledge of a theology whose vivifying influence they were daily losing more and more, as it became a source of worldly advantage, till at last they saw in it only a fable which was useful to them.* They, too, had to encounter at times

to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them . . . *to the end that whilst some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more readily consent to the inward consolation of the grace of God.*" Bede's Eccles. Hist. chap. 30.

* The transition from Gregory indulging his heathen converts with solemnities in honour of "the nativities of the holy martyrs, to the end that THEY may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of God"—to Leo X. exclaiming,—“This fable of Jesus Christ has been very useful to us”—is curious and instructive. The step had then been made from the apostolically-minded, though ill-judging prelate, to the selfish maintainer of the interests of his caste.

the invasion of barbarians, on whose superstitious fears they might depend for safety: or they had to resist, as a corporation, the encroachment of monarchs upon their privileges, in which contest, again, the superstition of the people was an useful ally. Thus the motives for encouraging a grosser worship were strong: the danger was remote, and at that time unknown. Few, even now after the experience of ages, seem to be aware that there must be a rational conviction of the truth of our faith ere it will influence the heart and life: and it has been the error of all ages to imagine that it is better to keep the people ignorant, and obedient to guidance, than to give them the light which will enable them to guide themselves. The difficulty of the undertaking has generally been the first discouragement: indolence and the love of power have usually done the rest.

ORPHEUS is the person to whom ancient writers have attributed the introduction of a multitude of gods. He is said to have been a Thracian;—to have accompanied Jason and the other Argonauts on their piratical expedition,—to have visited Egypt,—and to have brought from thence the doctrines with which he afterwards corrupted the rude but simple theology

of Greece. The poems and hymns attributed to him are many of them considered to be spurious, or much interpolated; but as far as ancient testimony goes, there seems little doubt that the doctrine he taught was that of ONE SELF-EXISTENT GOD, the Maker of all things, who is present to us in all His works: but this great truth was disguised under a mass of fables.* We may take as a specimen one of those which has reached us. "The origin of the earth was ocean: when the water subsided, mud remained, and from both of these sprang a living creature; —a dragon having the head of a lion growing from it, and in the midst, the face of God: by name Hercules or Chronos." (time.) By him an immense egg was produced, which being split into two parts, one became the heavens, the other the earth. Heaven and earth mingled, and produced Titans or Giants. †

Material things having been produced by some mysterious operation of the Divinity upon Chaos, all were held to be imbued with a portion of the Divine Essence: and as, according to the doc-

* See Cudworth, *Syst. Int.* cap. iv. §. 17, and Brucker, *Hist. Crit. Phil.* pars ii. lib. i. cap. 1, where the Orphic doctrines are fully discussed.

† Athenagoras, *Leg. pro Christ.* p. 17, folio ed.

trine of the sacerdotal caste, the Supreme Deity was too mighty to be approached by the vulgar, every object in nature was, as it were, deified, for the use of the people; and the portion of the Divinity by which it was supposed to be animated, had a peculiar name given to it, by which it might be invoked. The initiated, for the mysteries are said to owe their commencement to Orpheus, were taught that the One Supreme Deity was the source of all, and that the tutelary gods of air, fire, earth, &c. were in fact only emanations of his power, made manifest to men by tangible and visible objects. But when the Most High was no longer to be approached by the vulgar, the especial manifestation was soon individualized, and a polytheism which probably the first introducers of this mysterious doctrine never contemplated, was built upon it.

It is curious that to this day the rude tribes of Africa and of North America retain something of this early doctrine: the fetiche of the Negro, and the "medicine bag" or amulet of the Red Man, both consist of insignificant objects supposed to have some mysterious, in-dwelling, Divine potency linked to, yet quite distinct in nature from the object visible to the eyes. The fetiche in Africa even now is not unfrequently a

stone or a tree, or some other inanimate object ; and if we look back into the early times we are treating of, we shall find the same thing. The representation of the Cithæronian Juno, worshipped by the Thespians, was the trunk of a tree :—another of the Samian Juno, was a branch or log, afterwards fashioned into something of a human shape by the order of Procleus the Archon. Diana and Ceres were represented in like manner :* and the Dioscuri among the old Spartans had no image save two beams or trunks of trees, united by two transverse pieces.† The ancient Romans worshipped the god of war, under the form of a spear ; the Scythians deified a sabre ; the Arabs, down to the time of Mahommed even, had their sacred stone. We might have been puzzled by these short notices, had we not an instance of this kind of early worship recorded more at length. When the

* Clem. Alex. Protrept. c. 4. See also Tertull. adv. Gentes. Lucan, in his description of the sacred grove felled by Cæsar's orders, describes the representations of the Deities as rude trunks of trees.

. " Simulacraque mœsta deorum
Arte carent, cæsisque extant informia trunca."
Pharsal. lib. iii. l. 411.

† Plutarch, De amor. frat.

patriarch Jacob had had a divine vision, he awoke out of his sleep, and said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven." And Jacob arose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for a pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it, and vowed, "If God will be with me . . . so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me, surely I will give the tenth unto Thee." This place he called Bethel:—some centuries later Bethel was an idolatrous temple. The history of this one was probably the history of all.

The mysterious doctrine of Orpheus which gave tangibility and distinctness to the notions of the Deity, soon struck the imagination of the poet: Homer and Hesiod took it up, and finished the individualizing process, by giving names and forms* to the various sub-deities of the different powers of nature. Yet these were, for a long

* Athenagoras, after quoting Herodotus for the above assertion respecting Homer, adds, that until the statues had given human shape to the gods, they had not been named even.

time, only the poetical version of the old belief:—the One Supreme God still held the reins, and Destiny was looked up to as the ruler of these sub-gods, no less than of men. Æschylus, whose tragic genius found fitter matter in the simple, but sublime traditions of his forefathers, than in the ridiculous and disgusting tales of the Homeric mythology, has handed down to our days this part of the still popular faith, in his noble drama of Prometheus Chained: where he represents Jupiter as sending to beg from the prophet the knowledge of the yet future decrees of Destiny. Prometheus, who pretends to no foreknowledge but that of some few of these decrees which had been communicated to him, indignantly refuses to gratify the curiosity of his oppressor; who, in consequence, inflicts further tortures upon him, but cannot obtain the desired prediction. The expressions put into the mouth of Prometheus are remarkable,* and the whole

* ΠΡ. οὐ τᾶντα ταύτη μοῖρα πω τελεσφόρος
κρᾶναι πέπρωται

τέχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ἀσθενεστέρα μακρῶ

ΧΘ. τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστρόφος;

ΠΡ. Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι, μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινυές

ΧΘ. τούτων ἄρα Ζεὺς ἐστὶν ἀσθενέστερος;

ΠΡ. οὐκ οὖν ἂν ἐκφύγοι γε τὴν πεπρωμένην.

drama so wars against our general notions of the popular belief at that time, that in order to explain the possibility of such a public recitation being permitted and approved, we must suppose an under current of a very different theology from that of Hesiod. The invectives which the oppressed Titan utters against the *new* power of Jove; the allusions to wars in which he had himself assisted him, &c. lead us back very naturally to the time of the first colonization of Greece: and we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the Nature-worship of Orpheus had been

ΠΡΟΜ. Fate, which brings about its own ends,

Has not ordained this to be . . .

Art is much weaker than Destiny.

ΣΥΟ. But who holds the rudder of Destiny?

ΠΡΟΜ. The three formed Fates, the ever remembering Avengers.

ΣΥΟ. Is Jupiter weaker than these?

ΠΡΟΜ. He cannot escape from what is fated.

The masculine adjective attached to the feminine substantive *Μοίραι*, shews sufficiently that this poet, at least, had not the three old spinning women in his mind when he wrote the above passage. Aristoteles says in his treatise *περι κοσμου*, c. 7: *οἶμαι δὲ καὶ τὴν Ανάγκην οὐκ ἄλλο τι λέγεσθαι, πλὴν τοῦτον, εἰονεῖ ἀκίνητον οὐσίᾳ ὄντα*. "I think indeed that Destiny is nothing else but this,—i. e. God—so called from his unchangeableness." This philosopher adds that the three fates meant the past, present, and future.

mixed up with Hero-worship also, and that the Jupiter of the poets was little else than a successful Cretan pirate, who, with his companions, drove out the Asian chief who was beginning to civilize the people, and banished him to the wild regions of the Caucasus. If several centuries had elapsed between Prometheus, supposing such a person to have existed, and Hesiod, it was quite long enough, in times when song was the only record, to have invested conquerors, or benefactors of the human race, with some supernatural attributes ; a kind of pre-eminence which every master mind, in times of ignorance, is sure to attain.

The result, then, of the inquiry thus far, appears to be, that the first colonizers of Greece brought with them much of the simple faith and worship which we find recorded in the early Hebrew writings : a stone or a trunk of a tree was set up for a memorial, and the sons of him who had there experienced some deliverance, or been alarmed by some dream, worshipped where their ancestor had done, that Great Being whose rule they acknowledged, but whose name they ventured not to pronounce.* Superstitious

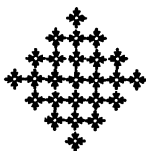
* Plutarch makes it a question why the Romans did

practices doubtless were mingled with this worship: the vow of Jephthah had more than its parallel in the sacrifice of Iphigenia and of Polyxena.* It was this ferocious race that Orpheus, the polished and learned traveller, endeavoured to humanize. Perhaps he imagined that his hidden doctrine would improve those of a higher rank, who were likely to be initiated; while the minds of the vulgar would be amused by his fables, and weaned from more gloomy superstitions by the worship of Divine Benevolence, as manifested in the different powers of nature. But however well meant the attempt, it failed of its object: the grossness of an ignorant age converted the different manifestations into separate Deities; and as, in later times, the crucifix or the image of the Virgin in some particular church was held to be more efficacious than any other, and to have some especial virtue of its own; so some particular representation or memorial of the Divine power was deemed more

not permit the god who especially protected Rome to be named, or made a subject of idle inquiry? Another proof that every nation felt that there was a Most High, whom they regarded with awe.

* These events must all have occurred within thirty years.

wonder working than another, and different cities came to have their tutelary stone, or log, or finally,—statue. The temple was built on the spot which early and pure devotion had hallowed, as was the case at Bethel: the men of the age when it was erected saw only the honour done to the place where their earliest feelings of piety had been awakened; and it was only in times far subsequent, that the cause of its first consecration was forgotten, and the image which reposed in that gorgeous fane became the object of ignorant worship, and the source of profit to a mercenary priesthood.





II.

GREECE UNDER ITS SAGES.

FROM 1044 B. C. TO 512 B. C.

WE have already taken a slight view of the fortunes of the early colonizers of Hellas up to the invasion of the Dorian hordes,* whose conquests drove the more civilized inhabitants forward towards the coast, and the territory of Attica, whence they re-colonized Asia Minor, and founded the cities of Ionia. From that time during a period of nearly three hundred years, tradition scarcely furnishes an event save the extensive colonization of the islands and coasts adjacent, by Æolians, and Dorians, as well as Ionians, a silent proof of the increasing population, and maritime enterprise, of the different states. The death of Codrus, the Athenian

* This event is sometimes called "The return of the Heraclidæ."

ruler, had left room for a contest as to the succession to the throne; and during the disputes of the two competitors, a third party had arisen, which refused to allow any other king than Jupiter.* The elder son of Codrus obtained the sanction of the Delphian oracle, and the democratic party were conciliated by what was ostensibly a compliment to Codrus. No one was worthy to bear the same title with this heroic monarch; his son therefore was only allowed the title of Archon, accompanied with some limitation of the regal power. His descendants continued to enjoy this rank till 752 B.C. when, without any assigned cause, the archonship was rendered a magistracy of ten years duration only, though still confined to the family of Codrus. History says nothing, but we may reasonably conclude, from such an event, that the great families were becoming powerful; that acts of oppression had been committed by the hereditary archons, which had alienated the affections of the commonalty, and that the nobility, by their aid, effected a revolution which put the main power of the state into their own

* Schol. Aristoph. Nub. quoted by Mitford in his Hist. of Greece.

hands; for as the selection of the archon was henceforward vested in them, he became little better than their puppet. After a lapse of seventy years, during which, as before, no event is noted, a farther change was made in the government: the Archonship for ten years was abolished; the office was now to be held for one year only, and its power was divided among nine persons, who were chosen by lot from among the nobility. This farther change was followed, as might be expected, by contests among the principal families for the power now within their reach, and attempts to seize upon the sovereignty.

During this time Sparta was engaged in a twenty years war with Messenia,* and its events may give some notion of the manners of the times. It took place about the time when the ten tribes of Israel were carried into captivity by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and a little after the foundation of Rome. We find the king of Messenia encouraging his men to a desperate resistance, by depicting the miseries which would attend a defeat: their wives and children would be carried into hopeless slavery,

* From 742—722 B. C.

their temples would be plundered and burnt, and their country desolated.* When defeated, they apply to the oracle at Delphi, and receive a command to sacrifice a virgin of the blood of Epytus to the infernal deities; whereupon Aristodemus, a nobleman of that family, proffers his own daughter as a sacrifice, whom he afterwards slays with his own hands,† and dissects, in order to shew that she had not been contaminated, as had been asserted in order to save her life.

The war ended by reducing the Messenians to the condition of farmers of their own lands for the benefit of Sparta; a state of things not likely to be long brooked by a high-spirited, and, till then, independent people: the same year which was signalized by the change in the Athenian government to annual Archons, was marked also by the beginning of a second Messenian war, in which the gallant Aristomenes strove to free his countrymen from their bondage. The Spartans, alarmed by his exploits,

* Pausan. lib. iv. c. 7.

† About fifty years before this, the king of Moab in like manner, when defeated, offered his own son and heir for a burnt offering. See 2 Kings iii. 27.

consulted the Delphian oracle, and received for answer, that they should seek a counsellor from Athens; but the Athenians, when called upon to comply with the commands of the god, unwilling to aid the growing strength of Sparta, picked out a person they thought little likely to be useful; the lame Tyrtæus,—hitherto known only as a teacher of grammar, which, in those times, when prose writing was little practised, included the art of poetry, and probably of rhetoric. Athens, it seems, had not yet been taught the power of words over the mind:—the Messenians learnt it to their cost:—the songs of Tyrtæus, worthy of a better cause, inspirited the defeated Spartans, and the sword of Aristomenes proved weak against the might of poesy: Messenia again lay at the feet of her ruthless conquerors, and they used their advantage barbarously: the Helots of after times, who were periodically hunted down like wild beasts, were chiefly Messenians.

The change of government in Athens, had either been caused by, or was attended with great popular disorders. Notwithstanding the severe code of laws promulgated by Draco, during his archonship, the great families still engaged in bloody dissensions; and about 598

B. C. Cylon, a man of noble, though not regal descent, seized on the citadel, and endeavoured to make himself sole ruler : Megacles, then archon, and of the family of Codrus, opposed him ; after a short struggle he fled, and his adherents took sanctuary at the most sacred of all the altars of Athens, that of the Eumenides, or avengers. They were lured from thence by treachery, and massacred ; a sacrilege which was for a long time urged as a cause for banishing all connexions of the family engaged in it.

Wearied at last by civil broils, and the revolts of subject states consequent upon them, all eyes in Athens were turned upon one man, as the only person capable of reforming the state. SOLON was made archon, with full power to re-model the constitution. After promulgating his laws,* he proceeded to travel in other countries, and in his absence Peisistratus possessed himself, by a stratagem, of the sovereignty. Notwithstanding the mode of attaining it, both he and his sons used their power well : the laws

* 594 B. C. They will be found at length in Mitford's *History of Greece*, chap. v. sect. 4, or more briefly in Heeren's *Handbuch der Geschichte der Staaten des Alterthums*, part iii. § 14, a work of extraordinary merit.

of Solon were maintained; Athens was beautified; means were taken for humanizing the citizens by the introduction of the fine arts; charitable provision was made for orphans, for the infirm and aged; and, in the absence of books, moral sentences were inscribed in conspicuous places:* the state was respected abroad, and enjoyed peace at home. This state of things was changed by the assassination of Hipparchus, the younger of Peisistratus's two sons, in consequence of a private pique.† Hippias

* "These tyrants," says Thucydides, dwelling mockingly on the word applied to them by Athenian tradition, "These tyrants greatly cultivated wisdom and virtue." Thucyd. lib. vi. The poor-law above mentioned, was extended to all who by mutilation, sickness, or age, were incapable of maintaining themselves; and amounted to from one to two oboli per diem, which was sufficient to purchase the necessaries of life: orphans were maintained and educated at the expense of the state, up to the age of eighteen, when they were armed and placed in the army. See Boeckh's Public Economy of Athens.

† The conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, though hymned by the Athenians of after times as the struggle of free men against tyranny, is said by the dispassionate Thucydides to have originated in motives as impure as the execution of their plan, if it had been merely for the overthrow of the tyranny, was unsuccessful.

the elder brother, equally incensed and alarmed, began to seek foreign alliances for his family, and to rule with great severity at home, which soon disgusted the people; the banished family of Megacles returned, and, with the aid of the Spartans, and the now discontented Athenians, expelled him. Cleisthenes, the son of Megacles, assumed the chief rule, and the first innovation in the laws of Solon was made by increasing the number of tribes from four to ten, and that of the great council from four hundred to five hundred. But though the change probably had in view the giving a somewhat more popular form to the government, or at least the curbing the power of the adherents of the banished family, no single ruler could be brooked: Cleisthenes and his Spartan allies were forcibly opposed and defeated, and the aristo-democratic form of government in Athens was confirmed.

The period which has just been slightly glanced over was fertile in great men. The

ful. But the hated rival was destroyed, which, probably, was the chief consideration. The attempt was no less unpopular than unsuccessful, for Aristogeiton, who escaped the guards, was seized by the people, and most unmercifully handled.

power which mental cultivation affords to its possessor was for the most part nobly used ; and few purer or more disinterested philanthropists are to be found than the lawgivers and sages of this period, whose names have been handed down to us by the gratitude of their fellow citizens. The names of Zaleucus, Charondas, Lycurgus, and Solon, are still famous as having been able legislators ; and if they failed to produce a perfect code, we may admit for them all, the excuse which Solon made for himself, when asked if he had given the Athenians the best possible laws, according to his own opinion. The sage replied that he had not ; but that he had given them the best they were capable of receiving.* From Moses downwards this has probably been the case, for the attempt to cut down prejudices all at once, and to change the whole customs and manners of a nation, would but end in the destruction of the imprudent innovator, without improving the people ; unless, as in the case of Christianity, the system was supported by superhuman means.

The custom of Greece gave the title of $\Sigma\phi\phi\sigma\iota$,

* Plutarch in *Vitâ Solonis*.

or sage, to those who excelled their fellows in science, or moral worth. It is fabled, or perhaps the tale may be a fact, that a golden tripod having been drawn up in their nets by some fishermen of Miletus, a quarrel arose as to its possession. The oracle at Delphi was consulted, and the dissension was allayed by its award of the tripod "to the wisest." The Milesians, by common consent, then offered it to their countryman Thales, who, with a laudable modesty, sent it on to Bias of Priene, who transferred it to Pittacus, and Pittacus to another yet, till it came seventhly to Solon, who finding no other mortal worthy of it, dedicated it to Apollo, as the only wise.*

The names of the seven among whom the tripod thus passed round, are differently given by different authors. THALES is, however, always placed at the head of them. He was a native of Miletus, in that Ionia where Grecian civilization had sought an asylum from Dorian barbarism; and he is looked up to as the founder of the Ionic school of philosophy, so fruitful in great men; and which closed its bright career by imbuing with its doctrines the

* See Brucker, Hist. Crit. Phil. p. ii. lib. i. c. 2.

son of a stone cutter, who, in spite of humble birth and poverty, won for himself the most illustrious name in all antiquity ; and whose purity of doctrine, and holiness of life, wrung from Erasmus the acknowledgment, that when he perused the life of this heathen, he felt tempted to exclaim, "Sancte Socrates ! ora pro nobis !"

At an earlier period legislation and political science had alone attracted the notice of the sage : but attention was now turned to the natural sciences also. "Thales, the Milesian," says Cicero, "who was the first who made such things a subject of inquiry, said that water was the origin of all things ; but God the mind which formed all things from it."* There is in this a striking parallelism to the history of creation given by Moses, scarcely to be accounted for, unless we suppose his opinions on this head derived from tradition. Thales had visited Egypt : he was somewhat junior to the Prophet Isaiah, and such an event as the destruction of Sennacherib's army could not but have made a strong impression on surrounding nations. The sage, travelling for information,

* Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. i. c. 10.

could therefore scarcely avoid the having his attention drawn to the Hebrew records; which is made the more probable from an expression which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates; that, for the higher doctrines of theology, his disciples must go to the barbarians.* The other opinions of Thales, as far as we have them recorded, are these—"God is the eldest of all things, for he is without beginning.† Death differs not from life, the soul being immortal,"—as a consequence of which, he believed the universe to be full of the disembodied souls of good and bad men, called by the Greeks *dæmons*. When asked "if a bad man could hide his evil actions from the Divine power?" "Not even his evil thoughts," he replied; and when farther questioned, "how to lead an honourable and a just life?" he answered, "By not doing ourselves what we blame in others." When asked "what is fairest?" he replied, "The world, for it is the work of God."‡

Thales is said to have had no teacher but the priests of Egypt; under their tuition, and by his own industry, however, he made consider-

* Plato Dial. Phædon. † ἀγέννητον.

‡ Diog. Laert. lib. i. § 35, 36, 37.

able progress in geometry and astronomy. He is said to have sacrificed an ox in thankfulness for the discovery that a right angled triangle could be inscribed in half a circle; and to have measured the pyramids, by comparing the length of the shadow with his own. In astronomy his opinions probably were clearer than his reporters make them. His first assertion, that night preceded the day, is again in conformity with the Hebrew account; he is farther said to have considered the stars and the moon to be of terrestrial substance, the former ignited, the latter giving light by reflection from the sun. His disciples are said to have taught that the earth was in the centre of the system;* but as that doctrine is elsewhere stated to have been first broached by Parmenides, † it is probable that Thales himself did not teach this. He is recorded to have predicted a total eclipse of the sun, which occurred in his time; the first calculated eclipse on record. ‡ He considered that all bodies, though almost infinitely divisible, were composed of atoms, i. e. particles incapable of farther division; and in this he was followed by

* Plutarch. de Placitis Phil. l. iii. c. 2.

† Diog. Laert. in vit. Parmen.

‡ Cic. de Divin. l. i. c. 49.

Pythagoras :* and he was no stranger to the magnetic and electric properties of the loadstone, and of amber. He is said to have considered these substances as endowed with souls ; † yet considering the decline of Grecian literature at the time the accounts which have reached us were written, considering too that the use of the mariner's compass was known, and had been known from time immemorial in some of the countries visited by Vasco de Gama ; ‡ we may give Thales credit for more knowledge on these subjects than either Plutarch or Diogenes Laertius were able to explain ; probably as much as we ourselves possessed up to the middle of the last century. Such were the extraordinary strides in knowledge made by one man almost unassisted ; we cannot wonder that his countrymen voted him the tripod. He lived to the age of ninety, and died full of years and honour, at the representation of the Olympic games, 540

* Plut. de Placitis Phil. l. i. c. 16.

† Aristoteles notices this opinion with regard to the loadstone in his treatise *de anima*, arguing from it that Thales must have considered the soul *a force* capable of causing movement, since he attributed a soul to the loadstone. De Anim. lib. i. c. 2.

‡ See Bailly, Hist. de l' Astronomie.

B. C. Paganism had not then become bigoted to falsehood, as was the case in after times, when the idolatry of the people became a part of the polity of states ; and Thales could profess without reproach, what afterwards sent Anaxagoras into banishment, and cost Socrates his life.

EPIMENIDES of Crete has by some been placed among the seven sages of Greece : at any rate he was in habits of intimacy with them. He is, however, more noted as a man of piety and holy life, than as deeply versed in science. He was sent for to Athens after the massacre of Cylon's adherents, to purify the city from the guilt which was supposed to have incurred the wrath of the gods, and occasioned a pestilence. Various lustrations were used by him ; among other ceremonies, he ordered a certain number of white and black sheep to be let loose on Mars' hill,* and wherever they lay down, he directed that an altar should be built to the god to whom that spot belonged : but to this god no name was allowed to be given. The order was scrupulously obeyed : seven centuries later, Paul, the apostle, stood upon this spot, pointed to the altar of the unknown God, and

* Ἀρειοπάγος. The court of Areopagus was held here.

spoke the doctrine boldly, which Epimenides had been too timid to give utterance to, or which perhaps he had but dimly discerned. A painter could not ask a finer subject than the intrepid apostle, laying his hand on that altar, which neither the arms of Xerxes, nor the yet more destructive force of time had injured, raising the other to heaven, and exclaiming to the astonished Athenians, "Him whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you—THE GOD THAT MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH!"

Many fabulous stories are told of Epimenides, and it is said that after his death divine honours were awarded him by his admiring countrymen; what is more certain, is, that he declined all the riches offered him by the Athenians, and asked only a free passage home, and their friendship for the Gnessians his townsmen.*

SOLON, by general consent has been placed among the wise seven. Younger than Thales and Epimenides, he was nevertheless intimate with both, and, like the former, appears to have made considerable proficiency in the natural sciences; for it is said that he corrected the reckoning of the lunar month made by Thales.

* Diog. Laert. lib. i. § 111.

His fame, however, rests mainly upon his laws, which, according to the state of society they were intended for, were probably wise ones, and as good as could have been promulgated without personal danger. What that state was, we may gather from what remains to us of his code. By his laws all freemen were divided into four ranks, determined by the amount of property. The first rank consisted of those whose land produced them yearly five hundred measures* of corn, wine, oil, or any other commodity of this kind:—the second rank must possess, in like manner, a yearly revenue of three hundred measures. These two were exempt from service on shipboard, and in the infantry; but they were bound to keep a horse for the service of the public; and, within the age of military service, to serve personally in the cavalry. Hence they had the title of *Hippeis*, Horsemen, or, as the word is often translated, Knights. The third rank, called *Zeugites*, were of persons whose lands produced two hundred measures, but less than three hundred. These were bound to serve in the infantry, among the heavy armed, and to be provided with complete arms

* *Medimni*. A *medimnus* was about 12 gallons.

for the purpose. The rest of the citizens, not possessed of lands yielding two hundred measures, were comprehended under the name of Thetes. These also were bound to military service; and if provided with sufficient armour, might increase the force of the heavy armed; if not, they served among the light armed and on board the fleet.* The offices of the state could only be filled by those of the three first classes, but all the four had a voice in the election of magistrates, in the decision of criminal cases as jurors—and in the general assembly of the people. The highest court was that of Areopagus: it consisted of all those who had passed through the office of archon with credit. Next to that was the senate, or council, as it is generally called: chosen by lot from the different wards or tribes of Attica: at first, when they were four, an hundred from each; afterwards, when Cleisthenes divided the country afresh into ten wards, fifty were chosen from each, making up five hundred whose characters were required to be such as would bear a strict scrutiny, which was instituted previous to their admission: a law which tells of a still simple state of man-

* Mitford's Hist. of Greece, Chap. v. Sect. 4.

ners. In this council the business was prepared for the general assembly of the people, whose consent was needful to the enactment of any new law. Besides these there were regular courts of judicature, and judges likewise made their circuits through the different districts, to administer the laws without giving plaintiffs the trouble of coming to Athens.

Slavery was continued unmodified ; and therein the code of Solon falls far behind that of Moses, which, in an earlier age, and among a less civilized people, had considerably ameliorated the condition of the captive. In barbarous times, the granting the vanquished his life was considered as an act of mercy, and the life thus granted was held thenceforward to belong to the victor : the necessity of personal service in war, often caused the cultivation of the land to be neglected ; it seemed natural, therefore, to employ captives in remedying the evils of the war, by bringing the neglected soil into fertility ; and the system, once begun, was too convenient to be abandoned. Thus a state of society sprung up, which we can scarcely comprehend, and which put the great mass of the people beyond the pale of the law. Both in Athens and Sparta, the slaves greatly outnumbered the freemen.

But such a state of things carries in it the seeds of decay ; the free citizens learn to despise honest industry, and to practise oppression ; the moral feeling becomes depraved, and the beneficial effect of independence on the human character is lost amid the license of tyranny.

It has been often and well remarked, that the degree of civilization among any people may be judged from the condition of its women. Endued with less of physical strength, that sex can only assume its due place where the powers of the mind are more honoured than those of the body ; and if we are to assume this as a criterion, we must place Athens low in the scale. The laws of Solon forbid a man to *sell* a daughter or a sister unless she shall have been guilty of unchastity : thus it is evident that the whole sex was viewed in the light of domestic slaves, and their injuries were noticed in the law, only in the proportion that it affected him whose property they were considered to be. Thus an adulterer was punished with death, while he who committed violence on a free woman, while single, was subjected only to a paltry fine.* The degraded state in which Solon

* Plutarch in vitâ Solonis.

found and left that sex, led to a deprivation of manners in Athens, and in the states of Greece generally, which, happily, has no parallel in modern times. It would be a relief to pass over so disgusting a subject in total silence, but as, even in our own days, there are some who shut their eyes to the evil effect on society resulting from the degradation of one half of it, there may be some advantage in bringing forward an extreme case, to show that the deficiency in principles of justice which leads to the denial of equal rights to the one sex, very soon leads also to the oppression of the other.

The next in the list of the honoured of Greece is CHEILON of Lacedæmon, one of the Ephori of that state. We have nothing left of his but a few moral sentences, and the testimony of those who have reported them, that his life was in full conformity with his precepts. Among these the injunction, "Not to slander our neighbours—to be more ready to share the misfortunes than the prosperity of our friends—to keep watch over ourselves—to suffer harm rather than take a dishonest gain—to be meek when in power—to bear injuries patiently—to seek peace—to honour age—to obey the laws," are such as an Apostle might give, and an

Apostle practise. He died as he had lived, honoured and happy; in the embrace of his son, who had just been crowned victor in one of the Olympic games,* exhausted, it is said, by old age and joy; and has left a fame behind him which the best might envy, for it is the fame of quiet, peaceful virtue, unstained by blood, even in a barbarous age.

PITTACUS of Mitylene, the metropolis of the island of Lesbos, is also reckoned among the sages of Greece; but his name must stand far behind that of Cheilon. His manhood was signalized by the assassination of the then tyrant, or ruler of Lesbos. He himself assumed the government, and conducted it well for ten years; † during which he enacted salutary laws, and at the end of that period, being required by the citizens to descend from his eminence, he did so with a good grace, and lived ten years longer, in complete privacy. One or two of his sayings are remarkable:—"Do not speak evil of your friend, nor even of your enemy—the

* Diog. Laert. lib. i. § 72.

† Aristoteles quotes the poet Alcæus to show that Pittacus exercised his power tyrannically. Polit. lib. iii. c. 10.

gods cannot contend with Destiny—it is difficult to be worthy.” And then follows what doubtless, if he deserved the name his countrymen gave him, he must have deeply felt—“Victories should be won without blood,”—and with this sad acknowledgment on his part, that his greatness stood on a false foundation, we will take our leave of Pittacus—great *for* his time, but not *beyond* his time.

BIAS of Priene also received the tripod. One of his apothegms is, “Speak of the gods as they are,” a sentence which implies much; and he inculcated humility, by enjoining, “Whatever thou dost of good, refer it to the gods.” His death was patriarchal: for having undertaken the defence of a friend before the tribunal, on finishing his speech he sate down in apparent weariness, and rested his head on the bosom of his daughter’s son, who was there. The adversary’s advocate replied; judgment was pronounced in favour of the friend of Bias, and the court being dissolved, the old man, when they tried to rouse him, was found dead in the lap of his grandson: so peaceably had his spirit fled that none had perceived it.*

* Diog. Laert. l. i. § 84.

CLEOBULUS, another of the seven, was, according to the phrase of the time, tyrant, i. e. ruler of Lindos, a town of Rhodes, and yielded in no point to his illustrious friends. He had visited Egypt in quest of science, and had profited by his travels; for his government of the small community he ruled over was just and wise; and he, and his no less accomplished daughter, are celebrated for the gentle virtues they displayed in their elevated rank.* The writings and learning of this princess are celebrated by ancient authors, but none of them have reached us. The sayings of Cleobulus accord with his character:—"Do good to your friends that their friendship may be strengthened, to your enemies that they may become friends:—let your daughters when you give them in marriage, though girls in age, be women in understanding," "by which," says the writer of his life with a laughable astonishment, "he implies that *even* girls should be instructed."† "Be more eager to hear than to

* Cleobulina was wont to wash the feet of her father's guests with her own hands. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. iv. c. 19.

† Diog. Laert. lib. i. § 91.

speak :—avoid injustice :—bridle the love of pleasure :—do violence to no man :—instruct your children :—keep up no enmities.”

PERIANDER, the son and successor of Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, has by some been placed among the wise seven, though his claim is very questionable, except in so far as he was a patron of learning. He appears to have been on intimate terms with most of the sages of his times, and if he was by them complimented with the tripod, it was probably but a compliment.

PHERECYDES has also been named by some, as numbered among the seven sages of Greece, though it is hardly certain that he was of Grecian birth. He is said to have asserted the immortality of the soul,* and if Ælian is to be credited, was a hardy contemner of the superstitions of his time. His works are lost, and he is chiefly remembered as the first writer of prose, and the instructor of a far greater man, whose commanding mind left its impress for ages on the countries where he taught. This man was PYTHAGORAS.

Those who now visit Calabria would scarcely suppose, from the present appearance of the

* Cic. Tusc. Quæst. l. i. c. 16.

country, that it was once the seat of philosophy, and of luxury. In fact, Magna Græcia,—for its numerous greek colonies won it that name in ancient times,—has scarcely any thing left to attract the traveller; and there is nothing to remind us of its former glories, but here and there a village whose inhabitants still retain the language of their forefathers.* But in the days which I am now describing, the southern extremity, just above Cape Spartivento, was occupied by the Locrians, whose lawgiver, Zaleucus, is still celebrated: a little higher, bordering on the now gulf of Tarento, was situated the city of Sybaris, so famed for the luxury and effeminacy of its inhabitants; and between these two, not far from the present Capo delle Colonne, was placed Crotona, where, after travelling over the larger part of the civilized world, Pythagoras established his school of philosophy.

It matters little where a man was born whose fame identifies him with the progress of the

* Some years back, when travelling in that country, I was assured that there were still three or four villages where the ancient Greek was yet spoken by the inhabitants. The difficulties of the journey, and the time it would have taken, prevented me from going thither to verify this curious fact.

human mind in general : most, however, agree that Pythagoras was a Samian, and that his birth occurred either about 586 or 568 B. C. a difference of date quite unimportant to the present purpose. His early history is involved in much obscurity, but it seems allowed on all hands, that, at some period of his life, he travelled into every country which was likely to afford him knowledge : indeed, that this was the chief purpose of his life, may be gathered from the reply he made when asked what his profession was. It was at once modest and expressive : "I am a lover of knowledge,"* said he ; and the distinction was afterwards adopted by all who devoted their time to science.

Having matured his understanding by this careful cultivation, he began to apply it to the benefit of his fellow men, and opened a school of philosophy at Crotona, in Magna Græcia. Thousands of both sexes, and of all ages, flocked to hear him, and the reform of manners consequent upon the moral lessons of the

* Φιλόσοφος. The sages of Greece had hitherto been termed Σοφοί, wise men ; Pythagoras modestly placed himself below them in terming himself only *philosophos*, a lover of wisdom.

teacher, was extraordinary.* It must remain a matter of deep regret, that the great principles of his philosophy, which influenced his hearers, as truth alone can influence, have not come down to us in his own words; for it is only from a few scattered notices in later authors, who scarcely understood his full meaning, that we can now guess at them even. The command he acquired over the minds of the Crotonians was used in promoting their political, as well as moral well being; when, indeed, were they ever separated? Crotona, under the rule of a council of three hundred, all imbued with his principles, quickly rose to greatness; and during forty years enjoyed unexampled prosperity. The new philosophical sect spread widely in the surrounding countries, and we soon find Pythagoreans dispersed, not only over Italy and Sicily, but in the islands and coasts of Greece: but at Crotona, as elsewhere, prosperity engendered its evils; the state engaged in a contest with, and conquered Sybaris: the people clamoured for an equal division of the conquered lands; the demand was resisted, and

* For a longer account of the life of this great man, see Gillies's *Hist. of Greece*, chap. xi.

Pythagoras, and his disciples, were banished. The philosopher died soon after at Metapontum, another city of Magna Græcia, and Crotona suffered the usual penalty of folly, in the decay of its greatness.

The discipline of Pythagoras extended itself not only to the moral conduct, but to the regulation of dress, of meats and drinks ; and a resemblance to the laws of Moses in one or two of his injunctions, leads to the conjecture, that in his various researches he had not neglected to study this code also, which, from the intercourse between Egypt and Judea, must have been well known in the former country. No animal not fit to be used in sacrifice was to be eaten by his disciples ; and they were commanded, when engaged in any religious rite, to wear clean white garments. Silence, modesty, temperance, and brotherly love, were enjoined ; and,—among the candidates for initiation into the deeper mysteries of his doctrine,—a community of goods ; the funds of the whole being administered by one of the members :—one of the first instances on record of a collegiate establishment. A probation of five years was expected from his pupils, after which they were instructed in the meaning of the enigmatical sayings, in

which, like Orpheus, he involved much of his doctrine. His wife Theano, worthy of such a husband, not only shared his labours during his life, but continued the philosophical school after his death : she is said to have written some works, now lost. Many extraordinary fables are related of Pythagoras, which are so incompatible with the character of the man, that they may safely be rejected :—thus, he is said to have affirmed himself to be the son of Mercury, who offering him any boon short of immortality, he asked that of memory, and, accordingly, professed to recollect the having passed through various bodies. On another occasion he is said to have feigned a descent to the infernal regions.* These tales probably deserve the same credit as the story of his golden thigh.

Unfortunately, as has been already observed, we have no writings either of the great teacher himself, or his no less gifted wife, from which to gather their doctrines : they are, therefore, to be collected only from the reports of disciples. In astronomy, he is thought to have held the same opinion as was afterwards promulgated by his pupil, Philolaus of Crotona, who taught that a globe

* Diog. Laert. in vitâ Pythag.

of fire,—the sun,—occupied the centre of the system, and that round it the other planets revolved. That the earth had a movement on its own axis, and that the revolution made day and night, and gave an apparent motion to the stars. That the earth itself was a spheroid, poised in the air; and that the moon and other planets were habitable globes like our own. A fanciful comparison of the seven primary planets to musical instruments, formed a part of the Pythagorean doctrine; and hence was said to arise that music of the spheres which the ancients were fond of imagining.* Like Thales, he conceived all matter to consist of certain indefinitely small bodies, incapable of further division, which, from that quality, were called atoms, i. e. indivisible bodies; and that by a certain numerical arrangement,† these atoms formed fire, earth, water, and air; but that by altering this arrangement, air might become water, and water air, &c. That when atoms of fire, i. e. heat, were introduced into water, it became fluid from the separation of its particles; but

* See Brucker, *Hist. Crit. Phil.* pars ii. lib. ii. c. 10.

† “*Pythagorei ex numeris et mathematicorum initiis proficisci volunt omnia.*” Cic. *Acad.* l. i. c. 37.

that fire being of a lighter nature, had a tendency to escape into the surrounding air, which thus either occupying more space, or becoming more dense, by the introduction of extraneous matter, exerted a pressure on the water, and squeezed out, as it were, the remaining particles of fire, until it became solid.* It would be neither possible nor profitable in this small treatise to follow out these speculations, so imperfectly handed down to us: we may consider them probably, as among those first glimmerings of truth, which great minds see in the distance, though they cannot quite reach them: but whilst raising a statue to Dalton for his proved theory of definite proportions, we should not altogether forget Pythagoras, who twenty-four centuries earlier, would probably have worked it out, had his age been less immeasurably behind him.

In theology, his opinions are not less worthy of remark. "The One Deity is the source of all things; his form, light; his essence, truth;

* Plato Dial. Timæus. This is little else than the doctrine of latent heat. It will probably be found that both are wrong, and that heat is not a substance: but, at any rate, modern science has not found it easy to drive Pythagoras from his position, with regard to its mode of operation.

he is the giver of good to those who love him, and, as such, to be worshipped: he is the soul of all things, pervading and maintaining the universe.* “The souls of men exist after the death of the body: all space is full of them,† and they are worthy to receive honour and praise when their course in this life has been good and virtuous:—the soul strengthens its holy dispositions by the exercise of devotion:—

* It is impossible to read these sublime notions of the Deity without comparing them with those of the Hebrew prophets: and when we recollect that Pythagoras was the contemporary of Cyrus; that he visited Egypt for the express purpose of collecting knowledge, and as some say, Babylon also, and that the events of the time must have drawn attention to the Jewish Scriptures, we may guess with some degree of probability whence they were drawn.

† According to Jamblicus, he divided unseen intelligences into inferior gods, dæmons, i. e. souls of dead men, and heroes: but Jamblicus did not write till the fourth century after Christ; and as this doctrine implies a contradiction which Pythagoras would scarcely have been guilty of, I am inclined to think it has been misunderstood. In a system where the One Deity is the soul of all things, pervading and maintaining the universe, inferior gods would not find place. His doctrine was, doubtless, that of Orpheus, and like it, was misinterpreted in after times. Dæmons and heroes are the same thing, i. e. immortalized souls.

knowledge should be sought as the means of approaching the nature and felicity of the Deity." The lofty spiritualism and pure morality of this system, long influenced the world; and though the disciples of Pythagoras, like all others who oppose the reigning vices of the age, were persecuted after a time, and driven from Crotona, this did but spread his philosophy more widely. Whether the doctrines of this great man were derived from the countries he visited, or from the depths of his own mind, must remain uncertain: he stands there on the very confines of the darkness of remote ages, like a bright star, whose splendour in its own sphere we can only guess at from the light which it conveys to our far distant orb.



III.

IONIA.

FROM 700 B. C. TO 428 B. C.

WHILST Athens under the laws of Solon, and the judicious rule of its mild “tyrants,”* had been silently, but rapidly advancing in science and arts, the fortunes of Ionia had been various. Within three centuries from their first establishment in this province, the Grecian colonies had risen to opulence by their commerce, and skill in the arts. Miletus, Colophon, and Phocæa, especially, shone forth amid a barbarous age as the seats of luxury and taste; their commerce with Egypt both enriched and enlightened them, and probably laid the foundation of that philosophic school which still sheds a lingering glory over the ruins of that once happy land. But in proportion as the cities of Ionia, and their dependencies, grew in

* Peisistratus and Hipparchus.

riches and splendour, they became objects of notice to the nations around them, and, after some unsuccessful contests, they appear, for the most part, to have fallen under the dominion of the powerful kings of Lydia. When the great struggle for the empire of Asia began, between Cyrus and Crœsus, the alliance of the Grecian cities of Ionia was sought by the former; but at that time they remained faithful to the Lydian monarch. After his defeat, they endeavoured to make terms with the conqueror, but it was too late: Miletus only was admitted to treat; the others, in despair, sought assistance from Greece, and Sparta was already fitting out an armament, when the rapid advance of the Persian generals rendered the succour useless. Priene was captured, the inhabitants sold for slaves, and the surrounding country given up to the soldiery. Phocæa and Teos, warned by the fate of Priene, preferred exile to slavery, and embarking on board their fleet, with their families and effects,* left an empty city to the invaders. The other towns, after an ineffectual resistance, submitted to the conqueror on his own terms, and as the greater part of the Per-

* Marseilles was founded by the fugitive Phocæans.

sian force was then employed elsewhere, these terms were not severe. Under the dominion of Persia the Ionian cities again rose to opulence, and were governed, for the most part, by rulers of their own, subject only to the supremacy of "the Great King." A love of freedom, nevertheless, still lingered among them, which made them unwilling subjects; and Darius, the successor of Cambyses, entertaining some suspicion of Histæus, tyrant of Miletus, sent for him to Susa under pretence of asking his advice on points of government, and kept him there in a sort of honourable confinement.* The wily Greek saw through the pretext, and, being determined to get free at any hazard, secretly sent to his nephew, Aristagoras, to urge him to revolt, hoping that, in this case, he should himself be sent to quiet the people. Aristagoras was already involved in a disagreement with the Persian authorities when the message arrived; and, accordingly, reckless of consequences, he called the people together, made a public renunciation of the sovereignty on the part of himself and his uncle, and at once raised the standard of independence. This done, not being

* Herod. l. v. c. 24.

mad enough to suppose they could alone resist the might of Persia, he departed to Greece in order to obtain succour from the parent states.

Meantime the Athenians had been engaged in a contest with the Lacedæmonians, in defence of their liberties, and alarmed at having drawn upon themselves the resentment of a state which had taken such fearful vengeance on the Messenians, they sent ambassadors to Artaphernes, the brother of Darius, at Sardis, to ask the protection of the Persian monarch. Artaphernes having enquired where this hitherto unknown state was to be found, briefly replied, that if they brought earth and water, the known tokens of vassalage, to Darius, they might be admitted to his protection ; if not, they had better depart. The ambassadors, impressed only with the danger from the arms of Sparta, accepted the humiliating terms. Their conduct was severely reprobated at their return, but this, probably, Artaphernes never knew. Shortly after this, Hippias, the son of Peisistratus, who had in vain sought assistance among the Grecian states, arrived at the residence of Artaphernes. He had allied himself by marriage with the tyrant of Lampsacus, who had considerable interest at the court of Persia ; and he

thus met with a ready hearing, and the supposed vassals of the Great King were commanded to receive back their prince. At the moment when the indignation excited among the Athenians by this haughty mandate, was at its height, Aristagoras, who had been unsuccessful with the Spartans, arrived at Athens. His artful recommendations were well seconded by the resentment of the people, and an armament in aid of the Ionians was immediately voted and equipped. With their aid, Sardis was taken and burnt, but the force of the confederates being too small to retain their conquest, it had no other effect than that of incensing Darius* to the greatest possible degree, by what appeared to him an act of wanton piracy.

Such was the beginning of that Persian war whose events have lived in the recollection and admiration of mankind during nearly twenty-four centuries, and probably will continue to do so to the end of time : for as long as the worth of freedom is known, as long as disinterestedness and self-devotion find any sympathy in the

* He commanded an attendant to keep the insult in his memory, by exclaiming every day to him, as he sate at dinner, "Remember the Athenians."

human heart, so long must the bay of Salamis, and the pass of Thermopylæ be remembered and hallowed.

The storm rolled first over Miletus : dissensions among the allies had left it without the expected succour from other states, and, in the sixth year of the revolt, this flourishing city was taken and burnt, its citizens massacred, and its women and children carried into slavery.* All the principal cities of Ionia, as well on the main land as in the islands, with the exception of Samos, which made a timely submission, shared the same fate. The next act of the tragedy was to be laid in Greece itself. After reducing all the smaller insular states, an army of an hundred thousand infantry, besides cavalry, was disembarked, under the guidance of Hippias, on the Marathonian shore, only thirty miles from Athens itself ; but the age had made its men : though the force which the Athenians could bring into the field was far short of the host of

* Herod l. vi. c. 19. The taking of Miletus having been brought on the stage at Athens, by Phrynichus, the dramatic poet, the whole audience burst into tears ; and so deeply were they affected, that a decree was passed, forbidding any future representation of this woful spectacle, under pain of a heavy fine.

Persia, they had Miltiades ; they had Aristides, great enough to divest himself of command, and induce the other generals in chief to do the same, in order that the military skill of his colleague might meet with no obstacle ; and they had stout hearts and strong arms to strike for their hearths and homes ;—but who is there that now needs to be told the result of the fight at Marathon ?

The discomfited Persians retreated to their ships, and this decisive day purchased for the Athenians ten years respite from the vengeance of the offended monarch ; during which time their fleet was employed in punishing the island states, which in their opinion had submitted too readily to the Persians. Miltiades at first had the command, and being unsuccessful at Naxos, at his return, wounded and dying, he was impeached and condemned to a heavy fine, or, as some say to death,—an instance of strange ingratitude, which unfortunately for the fame of Athens, was not without its after parallels.

In order to explain much of what follows, it will be needful to recollect that all through Greece, as must be the case in every country where civilization is rapidly advancing, the inhabitants were divided into two great factions ;

the aristocratical, and the democratical, or as we now, more familiarly term them, the conservative party, and that of the movement. Sparta, whose institutions admitted of no change, was at the head of the conservative, or aristocratic party; Athens, which ever since the death of Codrus, had been verging more and more towards popular government, was the leader of the democratical movement. The descendants of Codrus, still powerful, though deprived of the sovereignty, had been the indefatigable opponents of Peisistratus, and having rid themselves of his family, would brook no other rival near the throne. Miltiades had married a Thracian princess, and was himself the independent sovereign of a part of the Thracian Chersonesus; and their jealousy probably saw in him another Peisistratus, whom it was needful to crush. Xanthippus, who had married the niece of Cleisthenes, the lineal descendant of Alcmaeon, the last archon of the family of Codrus, conducted the prosecution of the great general, whose death from the consequences of his bodily and mental wounds, delivered the Alcmaeonidæ from a rival they feared, but left a dark blot on the Athenian name which no time can efface.

Meantime the gathering storm swept onward from the east : Xerxes had succeeded to his father's hatred of Athens, and at last, after subduing all other opposition, he crossed the Hellespont, and prepared to chastise the presumptuous state which had braved his power. But again the great occasion found men equal to it. A handful of Spartans, under their heroic king Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ against the whole force of Persia for three days, and when at last, by the treachery of a Greek, a body of the enemy was conducted over the mountains, so as to take them in the rear, they died amid heaps of the best troops of the invading force, slain by their brave despair. The victory of Xerxes cost him dear ; and though the noble self-devotion of that gallant band failed to arrest his progress, it taught his hosts to dread the obstinate valour of free men, defending all that was dear to them in life, and paved the way for the future triumphs of the Grecian arms. The Athenians, hopeless now of defending their city, by a no less brave resolve, abandoned their property and their homes to the fury of their enemies ; and having placed their wives and children in safety, embarked on board their fleet, under the command of Themistocles, and

with the other naval forces of Greece, met the Persian fleet off Salamis, in a conflict not less obstinate, but more fortunate, than that of Thermopylæ. Xerxes fled discomfited from the scene of his intended triumph, and in the ensuing summer, the two great battles of Plataea and Mycale, fought on the same glorious day, delivered Greece for ever from the dread of the Persian arms.

It is pleasant to look on the bright side of human nature, and after the brave struggle just noticed, the mind longs to find Athens and Sparta, the two eyes of Greece, as they were appropriately termed, travelling hand in hand on their glorious career; but this could not be. Different political institutions held them apart; the high tone not unjustly assumed by Athens, as the Saviour of Greece, offended the pride of other states, and dissensions broke out afresh. Faction resumed its sway at Athens as soon as the danger was over, and both Themistocles, and Cimon, the no less great son of the great Miltiades, in turn succumbed to the power of the opposite party. That class of the people which by the laws of Solon had been excluded from offices of state, after the termination of the Persian invasion, claimed a share in the government which

their swords had helped to re-establish: the claim was a plausible one, and a relaxation of the law was perhaps called for, under the altered circumstances of the country; but faction had again divided the greatest men of the republic. Themistocles and Aristides took opposite sides, and this latter, glad of an opportunity to curb the power of his rival by gaining the popular favour for his own party, in an evil hour, granted the demand in its fullest extent. From thenceforward no qualification of property was required for any office of the state, and it was too soon found that the hardy, uneducated demagogue, who could win the favour of the ignorant multitude, who were unable to decide on his capacity, might obtain power to ruin his country. The habits of the Athenian citizen, nevertheless, were not altered in a day; the people who had been led by a Themistocles and a Cimon, could not stoop as yet to the guidance of a Cleon, and forty glorious years more are marked as the æra of Pericles, a man not unworthy of the great names who had preceded him. During this time Athens arrived at the pinnacle of its power: its edifices were rebuilt in a style which, even in its ruins, still claims our admiration: its sculpture remains unequalled:

in poetry, in rhetoric, in philosophy, it has directed the march of the human intellect through all succeeding generations. Ages have passed over, but Athens has had no rival; nor, though the pismire labours of myriads, perpetuated by the aid of the printing press, may carry science forward to greater accuracy of detail, will those master minds who first held the torch to guide us on our way, ever cease to excite our admiration.

Such were the events amid which the philosophy of Greece was rudely cradled. Happily for mankind, it is under this rough nurture that intellect develops itself the most vigorously; and never has the world boasted a galaxy of greater names, than those which threw their lustre over the period which elapsed from the stormy rise of the Persian power, to its decline and final overthrow by the Macedonian arms. It has already been seen, that the wisdom for which Greece honoured its sages, was at first chiefly moral and political; the natural sciences were only added, as a sort of pastime, to what they considered the more important parts of a wise man's study. Of the seven, Thales and Solon alone gave any attention to natural phi-

losophy, and even when their successors saw the immense field of knowledge spread before them, and began to cultivate it, they rarely quite disengaged themselves from politics. Plutarch makes it a reproach to Epicurus, even in his time, that he alone, of all the Greek philosophers, taught his disciples to stand aloof from politics, and prefer a quiet obscurity to public charges and honours.* There will be need to recur hereafter to this peculiarity in the philosophy of Greece.

While Pythagoras was spreading the light of science in Magna Græcia, and preaching at the same time a faith and morality which a Hebrew prophet would not have disavowed; the school which Thales had founded at Miletus, was carried on by his friend and pupil ANAXIMANDER, and after him by ANAXIMENES, a Milesian also, who appears to have escaped from the desolation of his native city, and to have returned thither when the danger was over. Gross errors in natural science have been imputed to these philosophers, too gross to be believed; for who can imagine that the friend, or as some say, the relation of Thales, supposed eclipses to proceed

* Plut. contra Koloten.

from the casual shutting of a window in the sun or moon, through which the light at other times proceeded: or, that the contemporary of Pythagoras, whose disciples were spread over all Greece and Italy, could believe the earth to be an extended tabular surface, when the experience of every mariner of that commercial country would have told him the contrary. Probably in the fatal siege and capture of Miletus the greater number of pupils of this school perished; and those who in after times prosecuted Anaxagoras, the pupil of Anaximenes, for doubting the divine nature of the sun, we may well suppose paid little attention to the astronomical researches of this school of philosophy.

It has been already seen that Thales held the opinion, that all matter consists of certain indefinitely small particles, and that its first form was water, out of which the Supreme Deity formed all things. Anaximander and Anaximenes both differed slightly from their master as to this first step in creation, Anaximander asserting that infinity, *το ἄπειρον*, was the source of all material things, from which worlds were constantly in a course of formation, and into which they were re-dissolved:* Anaximenes

* See Brucker Hist. Crit. Phil. Pars II. lib. iii. c. 1.

affirming this infinity to be the air.* Both have been accused of atheism by subsequent writers; but as Thales, the teacher of Anaximander, and Anaxagoras, the pupil of Anaximenes, both held a supreme Mind to be the plastic force by whose power the universe coheres, so we may justly conclude that their atheism consisted in the rejection of the popular superstitions, and that the sole difference between these masters of the Ionian school consisted in their notions as to the primitive form of matter; a point of such mere speculation, as to involve no important consequence: for those who held the atomic theory of that age, considered, as we still do, on perhaps more decided proof, that water and air were but different modes of combination of the same material particles. Anaximander is said to have attempted a map of the world, and to have constructed a sphere for that purpose.† He is likewise said to have been the first inventor of the gnomon, and to have constructed one at Lacedæmon.‡ He, like the rest of the philosophers of that

* Cic. Lucull. c. 37. See also Aristot. *Metaph.* l. i. c. 3.

† Diog. Laert.

‡ See Brucker as above.

time, appears to have held the doctrine of Orpheus with regard to the omnipresence of the Deity : thus the heavenly bodies were to be considered divine, not in regard to their material atoms, but as being the seat of a part of the divine power by which they were ruled and maintained.

XENOPHANES, of Colophon, another city of Ionia, is distinguished as the founder of a fresh school of philosophy, differing in some points from that usually called the Ionic. When the Phocæans fled from the arms of Cyrus, a part of them founded the town of Elea, or Velia, in Magna Græcia ; and as the most distinguished followers of the above mentioned philosopher were citizens of this place, the sect was in consequence termed Eleatic. Xenophanes himself, like others of the Ionians, appears to have fled from his native country to avoid the slavery with which they were threatened by the successes of Cyrus, and to have lived in great poverty in Sicily, where he obtained a scanty subsistence as a bard, singing his own compositions in Zancle and Catana. In these verses, he is said to have ridiculed the fables of Homer and Hesiod relative to the gods, and as the Pythagorean doctrines had spread largely in

this region, his satires were likely to have been heard with approbation.

Xenophanes appears to have possessed a mind of peculiar acuteness, which led him to feel dissatisfied with the loose mode of argument adopted in the Ionic school: accordingly we find him grounding his opinions on a very strict course of reasoning. He assumes in the first place as an axiom, that something must have existed eternally, because it is an absurdity to suppose that anything could ever have come into existence, had there ever been a time when there was nothing.* Then, whatever is eternal must necessarily be infinite, as it can have neither beginning nor end—but what is infinite must be ONE, since if there were more, one would set a limit to the other, which is inconsistent with infinity:—and what is essentially one, can have no difference of parts; otherwise there might be a discription, which would make many things instead of one. Moreover, what is eternal, infinite, and without distinction of parts, must be immovable and immutable, for there can be no place

* *αἰδιον εἶναι φησὶν εἰ τί ἔστιν, εἴπερ μὴ ἐνδέχεται γενέσθαι μηδὲν ἐκ μηδενός.* Aristot. de Xenophani, which see for the opinions of this philosopher.

where it is not, therefore, it does not move; nor can it be subject to change, for then it would at some time be what it was not before, which would be equivalent to the creation of a new nature, a thing impossible where there is no more powerful cause existing. There is therefore, ONE ETERNAL, INFINITE, IMMUTABLE BEING, by whom all things consist, and this ONE BEING is GOD; incorporeal, omnipresent.* He has nothing in common with man, either in form or mode of existence,—he hears all, sees all, but not by human senses: he is at once mind, wisdom, eternal existence.†

The difference between the Ionic and Pythagorean doctrine, and that of Xenophanes, appears to be this:—that while the former considered the material atoms of which all things are compounded, and the plastic power which called them into *active* existence, as two separate prin-

* See Brucker, Hist. Crit. Phil. Pars. II. lib. II. c. 11.

† Diog. Laert. in vit. Xenophanis. This writer adds also, "that the substance of God is spheroid;" but Xenophanes was too close a reasoner to advance a contradiction, and Aristoteles does not charge it upon *him*, but upon Zeno Eleates: it is, therefore, evident that on this point the biographer was mistaken.

ciples, constituting as it were, the soul and body of the world; Xenophanes could not in the strictness of his argument, allow any second principle, but at once refers all existence to the operation of that single Power, which alone exists necessarily. This controversy has continued to divide philosophers ever since, and will probably never be finished as long as the world lasts; because no advance of science can ever give us *perfect* cognizance of the matter in question. With the perverseness which always leads men to carry a controverted opinion to its utmost verge, the one party has denied the existence of any immaterial principle,—the other, that of any material substance, and both having a portion of truth mixed with their error, have found followers. In our own time, Cabanis and Bishop Berkeley have been the most unshrinking representatives of the respective sects of materialists and idealists, or more properly, spiritualists. Cabanis refuses to see in man, or in any material substance, any thing but the movement of material parts, consequent on the laws of matter; and asserts that thus certain functions are executed: but here common sense steps in, and decides that though he has given a good exposition of *some* of the phenomena of

nature, he has not explained all; and that, therefore, something more is wanting to his theory. Berkeley boldly denies the possibility of proving any material existence whatever; all *apparently external* things are *perceived internally*: the universe, therefore, is an idea in the mind of God, reflected upon the mind of man as in a mirror, and there is no such thing as matter at all. Common sense allows his argument, and laughs at it: and, notwithstanding all that has been urged on both sides, the bulk of mankind still persists in believing in immaterial as well as material existence.* As far as pure reasoning goes, the argument of Xenophanes is complete: the physical studies of the Ionic and Pythagorean schools perhaps enabled them to add what they might consider an experimental proof of the eternity of matter; i. e. that through all its countless changes no atom is ever lost; but still this is nothing more than a presumption, and the argument of Xenophanes cannot be shaken: the manner, therefore, in which matter has its existence, will most likely

* See, for a fuller examination of the subject, an Essay by M. Jouffroy, *Du Spiritualisme et du Materialisme. Mélanges Philosophiques*, tom. i.

remain an unsolved problem as long as we form part of a material universe.

The opinions of Xenophanes on physics have been strangely reported; probably by persons who did not understand them; for some of the notions imputed to him are too grossly improbable to have found favour with one so well capable of detecting false reasoning. He is said, for instance, to have taught that the stars were nothing but kindled exhalations, which were quenched when they appeared to set, a fresh illumination taking place on the following night. This, at a time when the periodical rising and setting of certain stars had already been noticed and recorded, is clearly an impossible degree of ignorance in a man of Xenophanes' rank in science, and must have been advanced by him solely of those meteors which are still entitled shooting or falling stars. Thus he is also said to have taught that there were many suns, which has been interpreted to mean that when any accident happened to one, the earth was presently supplied with another: it is a more probable conjecture that, as he taught that there were also an infinite number of worlds, he, like modern astronomers, considered the fixed stars to be suns, giving light to their re;

spective systems. These specimens of misrepresentation may suffice: little is to be gathered from such reporters. Cicero, more exact in his information, tells us that Xenophanes believed the moon to be a habitable globe like our own:* and he is elsewhere said to have observed the fossil remains found bedded in rocks, and to have concluded from thence, that the earth must at some previous time have undergone notable revolutions, in which the existing race of beings had perished.

HERACLEITUS, of Ephesus, though for a time acknowledged as the founder of a sect of philosophy, delighted so much in enigmatical expressions and mysterious concealment, that even his contemporaries did not always understand him, and his successors still less. The dogma which is generally held to be especially his, is that fire is the origin of all things, guided by fate. According to Aristoteles, he considered that all nature was in constant movement, one power alone was permanent, and by it all was shaped and fashioned: † this power pro-

* Cicero, Lucull. c. 39.

† ἐν τῷ δὲ μόνον ὑπομένειν, ἐξ ἧς τὰ ἅτα πάντα μετασχηματίζεσθαι πέφυκεν. Aristot. de Cælo, lib. iii. c. 1.

bably was the *έιμαρμενης*, or fate, spoken of by other writers, who notice the philosophy of Heraclitus, and by whatever name called, was none other than the One, Unerring, Supreme Will, or Deity, which the whole of the Ionian school acknowledged. It appears, therefore, that this philosopher only made a slight variation in the previous Ionic theory, by putting fire in the room of water or air, as the first form in which matter existed. It is not impossible that the Magian doctrines,* which about that time were gaining a wider spread, might have had a share in influencing his views. He is said to have been offered the supreme rule of his native place, by his fellow citizens, in order to the giving them a wholesome code of laws; but disgusted by the profligacy which he saw around him, and thinking, perhaps, that such a step might give umbrage to the Persian governor, he refused the offer.† He derided the superstition of his countrymen without reserve, telling them that they might as well pray to the stones of their

* The Magians, though called fire *worshippers*, merely honoured it as the visible representative of the divine power.

† Diog. Laert. in vit.

houses, as to a stone image.* Some think that he was banished from Ephesus on this account: but the revolt of the Ionian cities, about this time, was a probable reason for his retirement to the mountains, where he lived as a hermit, weeping perpetually, it is said, over the miseries of human existence; which, indeed, were at that time carried to their height in the deplorable calamities of the fairest part of Ionia.

The philosophico-theological creed of those days appears to have been generally that of Orpheus, i. e. that a pervading intelligence animated all nature, and that the human soul was a portion of it: consequently, the blessedness of this latter consisted in a re-absorption into its divine original. The saying of Heracleitus, that "life was the burial of the soul, death, its deliverance from bondage,"—indicates such to have been his belief also. His learning was held in high esteem by his contemporaries, and his name long kept its place among those of the most celebrated philosophers,† but as he gave no permanent tincture to the opinions of his

* Clem. Alex. Protrept. c. 4.

† Plutarch ranks him with Parmenides, Socrates, and Plato as a moral teacher.

age, and as, even then, he had the title of *σκοτεινός*, i. e. obscure, it is needless to bestow a longer consideration on his doctrines.

PARMENIDES, one of the most famous of the Eleatic sect, was the contemporary of Heraclitus. Like most of the sages of old, he was at once philosopher, poet, and legislator, and in this latter capacity bestowed on his native city so excellent a code of laws, that Plutarch assures us it was the practice, even down to his time, to require the officers of the city to swear when they entered upon their charge, that they would observe the laws and ordinances of Parmenides. In philosophy he appears to have endeavoured to reconcile the tenets of Pythagoras and the Ionic school with those of Xenophanes: There are in nature, he said, two species of things; the one variable and uncertain, which we view by our external senses and which is a subject of opinion only; the other, one and immutable, to be discovered only by our reason:* a doctrine in which logical reasoning, common sense, and observation are blended, as was to be expected from so eminently practical a man: it must remain therefore, a matter of deep regret, that

* Plutarch cont. Koloten.

of all his writings, both on this subject, and many others which he treated of,† only a very few disjointed fragments remain. His scholars, and Melissus especially, appear to have pushed his system to the extreme of idealism; asserting that nothing really was generated or decayed, but merely appeared to us to be so.‡

One other less desirable celebrity has been acquired by Parmenides: that of having been the first to assert that the earth occupies the centre of the universe; being so equidistant from all parts, that it remains poised by an equal attraction on all sides. In one point of view this record is curious and interesting, as it shews that the force of gravitation was not unknown to the philosophers of that day. By what arguments Parmenides supported his new opinion we are unable now to tell: for the futile

† "He discoursed much," says Plutarch, "respecting the earth and the heavens, the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the creation (*γενεσιν*) of man; and has left nothing unnoticed, for he was a man versed in physiology from of old, and has written his own observations, not those of others." Plut. cont. Kolot.

‡ *ἔθεν γὰρ ἔτε γενεσθαι φασιν, ἔτε φθίρεσθαι τῶν ὄντων, ἀλλὰ μόνον δοκεῖν ἡμῖν.* De Cælo, lib. iii. c. 1.

one afterwards drawn by Pliny the elder, from the equal length of night and day at the equinox, seems too slight a foundation for such a man as Parmenides to ground a system upon. Be that as it may, the error spread, and soon became so firmly rooted, that it remained the established creed in astronomy down to the days of Copernicus and Galileo. The only probable cause that can be assigned for so extraordinary a fact, is the desolation brought upon the civilized world by the Babylonian first, and then the Persian conquests. In the burning of cities and temples manuscripts perished: in the massacre or enslavement of the inhabitants of whole regions, those who might have handed down the learning of the preceding age were cut off; and when Athens arose from her ashes, and the cities of Ionia were again peopled, and Egypt revived under the rule of the Ptolemies, the science of past ages had to be discovered anew. Thanks to the printing press, the world has no reason to dread the recurrence of such a calamity.

The Eleatic sect ended with the disciples of Parmenides, for LEUCIPPUS, though a pupil of one of them, i. e. of Zeno Eleates, may be considered as the founder of a new school, rendered famous by the name of Democritus, and giving

rise in part to a yet more famous sect, that of the Epicureans. We have already seen that Parmenides' physiological studies gave him a leaning towards the Pythagorean and Ionian theory of material atoms; that is, he allowed that there was in nature, besides the one eternal existence discovered by reason, something that our senses took cognizance of, though only as a matter of opinion. Leucippus, waiving the argument as to the Being which our reason takes cognizance of, attached himself to researches into the nature of what is obvious to our bodily senses. The universe, according to him, consists of an infinite vacuum, and an infinite number of material atoms floating in it, which, by certain movements, and attraction towards each other, become conglomerated, and form the different bodies perceivable by our senses, and which from the same agencies are in a perpetual state of change. The efficient cause of these changes was, according to him, a certain necessity, the nature of which he did not explain.*

* *είναι τε . . . κατὰ τινὰ ἀνάγκην.* Diog. Laert. in vit. Leucip. It has already been seen that this Necessity, or Fate, was acknowledged among the Greeks as the Supreme Deity, to whom both gods and men were subject. See Aristot. de Mundo, c. 7.

There will be occasion hereafter to return to these tenets, when they are more developed by Democritus and Epicurus : it is time now to turn to the leader of the opposite school, ANAXAGORAS, of Clazomene.

This philosopher, whose name has become famous as the instructor of Pericles and of Socrates, was born of noble and wealthy parents, about the time of the Ionian revolt ; and early became a scholar of Anaximenes, the then head of the Ionic school. Possibly both might find themselves in the same place of refuge, and thus the young Anaxagoras obtained the advantage of Anaximenes' tuition sooner than he would otherwise have done ; for, many years after, when he returned to Clazomene, and saw his paternal inheritance lying desolate, he is reported to have said,—“ But for this destruction I myself should have been lost.*”—Though he is thought to have filled the chair of Anaximenes for a short period, the greater part of his life, after he had attained to manhood, was spent at Athens, which he first visited in his twentieth year, at the very time when its brave citizens were betaking themselves to their wooden walls

* Val. Max. lib. viii. c. 7.

to preserve the liberty of Greece; and even Themistocles is said, during some part of his brilliant career, to have studied the lore of the young philosopher. It would seem that, after the day of Mycale and the subsequent successes of Cimon had freed Ionia from the dread of the Persian yoke, Anaxagoras returned to his country; but after no long stay there, came back to Athens, where he is said to have spent thirty years.

Anaxagoras saw before him the evils resulting from the system of mystery introduced by Orpheus, which, while it opened its truths only to the learned, left the vulgar a prey to the grossest fictions, and plunged them into both polytheism and idolatry; he probably saw too the fault of the Ionic doctrine generally, which so united the Divine Spirit with material nature, that it amounted almost to a deification of the latter, and he appears to have resolved to free his philosophy from both these faults. He, therefore, boldly faced the superstition of his time, declaring openly that Phœbus himself, the great Delphian god, was nothing more than a ball of glowing metal or rock, which transmitted its warmth to the earth; and that the moon, the Diana of Greece, the Isis of Egypt, was nothing more than another habitable earth,

with hills and valleys like our own. He taught that there was but *ONE GOD*, and that was the intelligent *MIND* which had given movement and consequent form to the material atoms of the universe, and which, though it pervaded and ordered all nature, was separate, and unmixed with any material substance.*

Pericles, the great statesman of Athens, who, before he became acquainted with Anaxagoras, had listened to the far more questionable doctrines of Zeno Eleates, soon became a convert to his teaching: the licentiousness and extravagant luxury which the plundered riches of Persia had cherished and maintained, were already beginning to threaten the best interests of the state, and were deeply felt by Pericles himself, in the unhappy home thus created for him.† There was that in the doctrine of Anaxagoras, which was of power to reform the public morals, and fix the government on a surer foundation; and Pericles and his friends, with a noble enthusiasm, appear to have become the

* Aristot. *Metaph.* l. i. c. 3.

† The wise economy introduced by him into his house expenses was bitterly complained of by his first wife, and his sons by her. See Plutarch's life of this statesman.

apostles of the new philosophy, new at least in the simple and bold avowal of its principles.

About this time too, Anaxagoras found another and powerful auxiliary in the person of one of the most famed and the most maligned of all the characters of antiquity. ASPASIA, the daughter of Axiochus, a Milesian, made her appearance at Athens as a teacher of rhetoric and politics.* Her glowing eloquence, her talents, her youth, her extraordinary beauty, won

* Aspasia has been stigmatized as a courtesan, a charge not very compatible with a life so devoted to learning as to have made her an able teacher of the above sciences at a very early age. When we recollect too, that the severely virtuous Pericles made her his wife; that their only son, though illegitimate by the laws of Athens because his mother was a foreigner, must, from his age, have been born some time after their marriage; and that Socrates, in after times, carried the wives and daughters of his friends to profit by her conversation and instruction; we may well believe that the reproaches so plentifully cast upon her, were but the calumnies of a faction, invented for a political purpose. Those really known to be courtesans, Lais for instance, or Theodota mentioned by Xenophon, Mem. lib. iii. c. 11, made no pretensions to philosophy: but on the other hand, those who did study philosophy, and spurned the silly etiquettes of Grecian society, were thus stigmatized by the impure and the envious; and later writers have repeated the charge without examination.

upon all hearts; and the Athenians, who till then had thought a woman capable of nothing but the superintendence of the loom and the storehouse; who considered a wife merely as a household drudge, and could not suppose that rational intercourse and friendship with a female was possible; suddenly saw themselves obliged to bow before female intellect, and learned the eloquence which was to captivate the multitude, and the arts by which they were to wield the power of the state, from female lips. The most distinguished characters in Athens attended her lectures; Pericles,* then in almost the height of his power, and Socrates just entering upon life, alike sought her instruction. She herself embraced the opinions of Anaxagoras, if indeed, she had not already been trained in his school at Miletus, and appears to have co-operated with all her power in the project of reforming the religious creed, as well as the manners, of the country. Euripides, the

* Pericles' famous funeral oration for the slain at Samos, is said to have been composed by Aspasia. See Plato. Menex. She is said also to have been the adviser of that expedition; a stroke of policy questioned by some, but which, by establishing the popular party in Samos, gained a new ally for Athens.

tragic poet, enlisted himself in the same cause, and the new sect spread so rapidly as to alarm the opposite party. The conservatives of Athens dreaded, or affected to dread, the change of manners likely to be introduced by the new system;* and a decree was procured, that those who disputed the existence of the gods, or broached new opinions respecting celestial appearances, should be tried before an assembly of the people. The comic poets, whose gross ribaldry had always been discouraged by Pericles, were the ready tools in the hands of the opposite faction; and after a series of both personal and political libels, aimed at the great

* At the time when this law was proposed, the religious festivals, sacrifices, &c. supplied the indigent citizens with a considerable part of their maintenance. Even the theatrical entertainments, which the Athenians were so passionately fond of, were exhibited at a religious festival, i. e. the Dionysia, or feast of Bacchus; and a gratuity was distributed to the people on that occasion. It was easy, therefore, to rouse them to maintain those rites which furnished them with so large a part of their subsistence. The expense which this entailed upon the state, became at last so ruinous, that within fifty years after, we find Demosthenes complaining that the money which should have maintained their fleets and troops, was wasted in feasts and plays.

statesman, the master stroke was attempted, by attacking his private friends no less than himself with a series of prosecutions. Pheidias, the still unrivalled architect and sculptor, was thrown into prison on frivolous pretences: Pericles himself was called on to give an account of his administration, in terms that implied a reproach, and Anaxagoras and Aspasia were prosecuted under the new law, for impiety. A farther ridiculous charge was added against Aspasia, as it had been against Pheidias, of keeping free women in her house for the private pleasures of her great pupil: a charge, which the character given of Pericles by the great contemporary historian of Greece, sufficiently disproves, even if the commonest principles of human nature had not sufficiently convinced us already, that a woman engaged in such a traffic could never have been the confidante and guide of the great and wise minister of Athens. But it is scarcely indulging a conjecture to suppose that the scheme for the reform of religion and manners, embraced that of restoring women to such a position in society, as should curb the fearful depravation which so unblushingly prevailed: and the young women of free or noble birth whom Aspasia entertained in her house, were no

doubt her pupils ; but in a nobler science than the gross minds of her accusers could understand. The stepping beyond the walls of the Gynæceum and mixing in general society, were things as much proscribed by the customs of ancient Greece as of modern Turkey, and those who disdained these restraints were instantly supposed to have broken through all others.*

Pericles found it beyond his power to save both the accused, though he personally undertook their defence. For Anaxagoras he pleaded the blameless life they had all witnessed, and with difficulty obtained the commutation of the sentence of death into banishment ; which he lightened as far as possible, by carrying his honoured instructor a part of the way towards Lampsacus, his future abode, in his own chariot. In Aspasia he felt a yet dearer interest, and in her cause all the powers of the rhetoric he had learned in her school were exerted : but nature

* Some amusing instances have occurred in modern Turkey of the impression made on the minds of pashas and other dignitaries, by the unveiled and unrestrained women of Europe: courtesy alone preventing them from characterizing such females in the same terms that the ancients used in speaking of the female philosophers of their time.

taught a better rhetoric still : the danger of one he loved so well overcame the proud reserve of the statesman and the general ; he burst into tears ; and to those unwonted tears the sensitive Athenians granted what their fanaticism or their party spirit would perhaps have denied to arguments ; Aspasia was acquitted “ much against the tenor of the law,” observes the biographer, and Pericles, as she had been so nearly sacrificed on his account, resolved to shelter her in future, and made her his wife.

Anaxagoras is said to have fallen into so much poverty at Lampsacus, that he had covered his head to die ; but Pericles hearing of his state, hastened to him, and by timely succour, and friendly assiduity, lengthened the life of his friend and instructor, whose decease did not occur until the year after that of his noble pupil. The opinions of this philosopher on physics, have, as usual been very imperfectly reported : he appears to have differed slightly from Thales in regard to the elemental form of matter, which he considered as consisting of various kinds of perfectly similar particles* each

* *αρχὰς δὲ τὰς ὁμοιομερείας.* Diog. Laert. in vit. Anaxag. Cic. Lucull. c. 37.

species of which, by natural attraction joined into one substance:—thus, that the matter of bone would be formed of one kind of particles, —flesh of another, and so on. Such at least is the representation given of his opinion on this head, by Aristoteles and Lucretius, who combat it with more violence than justice perhaps, for the ancients were by no means precise in the use of the word *στοιχεῖα*, *elements*, and it is most probable that Anaxagoras did not understand it in the same sense as his opponents, and that his *ὁμοιομερεῖαι* were merely what we should now call compound atoms, not elemental ones, which latter, among the more ancient natural philosophers, would have been termed principles. The notion that bodies consist of similarly formed particles, was perhaps adopted from observing the constitution of minerals of easy fracture, which constantly split into similar forms; reasoning from analogy, he might conclude that such would be the case with all substances, if they could be split in like manner. He is said to have considered earthquakes as the effect of air within the earth;—wind as the effect of the rarefaction of the air by the sun; lightning as the effect of friction of the clouds

on each other: modern philosophy has not much to change in this.

In treating of the opinions of the ancient philosophers we must always recollect that the fragments of them which remain to us, are, for the most part, handed down to us by persons who evidently were ignorant, in many cases, of the very first principles of the philosophy they report; so that all the observations, arguments, and experimental proofs, by which the studiers of nature in ancient times supported their views, have been wholly lost. Aristoteles, the only person capable of doing justice to his predecessors, was not born till nearly fifty years after the death of Anaxagoras; and between the banishment of this latter, and the establishment of the former as a teacher, nearly a century elapsed; so that he, clear and logical as he was in all his reasonings, wanted the proper data on which to ground them, whilst criticising the supposed tenets of those who preceded him; and in no instance is this more apparent than in his mention of the philosophical views of Anaxagoras. Yet we have in his writings valuable remnants of them, which give rise to a suspicion that they were more profound than

his own. On the subject of the soul, he acknowledges that Anaxagoras, while asserting that one Supreme Mind put dead matter into motion to form the universe, asserted equally that the moving power in man, and the soul, were two distinct things; and that this latter was of a nature unlike any material thing, and separate from the bodily perturbation of the passions: in which opinion he stood alone,* says the Stagirite; a point, however, which admits of considerable doubt.

The natural philosophers of the earlier ages have probably been too lightly esteemed of late: they have been held wild theorists who hit right sometimes by chance; but it has not been sufficiently considered that while the road to truth is but one, the ways of error are innumerable; and that, therefore, the hitting right by chance is not a thing of such common occurrence as to justify us in assuming such to have been always the case. Numa is said to have fetched lightning from the skies at pleasure, by a process which was attempted by his successor, Tullus Hostilius; who, failing, killed himself and burnt his palace.† The art was said to have been

* Aristot. de Anim. lib. i. c. 2.

† Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. ii. c. 52.

well known to the old Etrurians; some acquaintance with the laws of electricity, therefore, must have been possessed by these persons. Pythagoras, who visited Italy shortly after Numa's death, might well become acquainted with the science of Etruria, from whence he probably gained that true notion of the Solar system which Numa also appears to have possessed :* but of the philosophy of Pythagoras, or the science of Etruria, alas! what now remains to us?—Yet even in these short and scattered notices, misunderstood as they were by those who handed them down to us, there is enough to give the modern philosopher room for thought, and perhaps to raise a suspicion in his mind that he is but re-discovering what former observers had known, if not so accurately, at least with some degree of certainty.

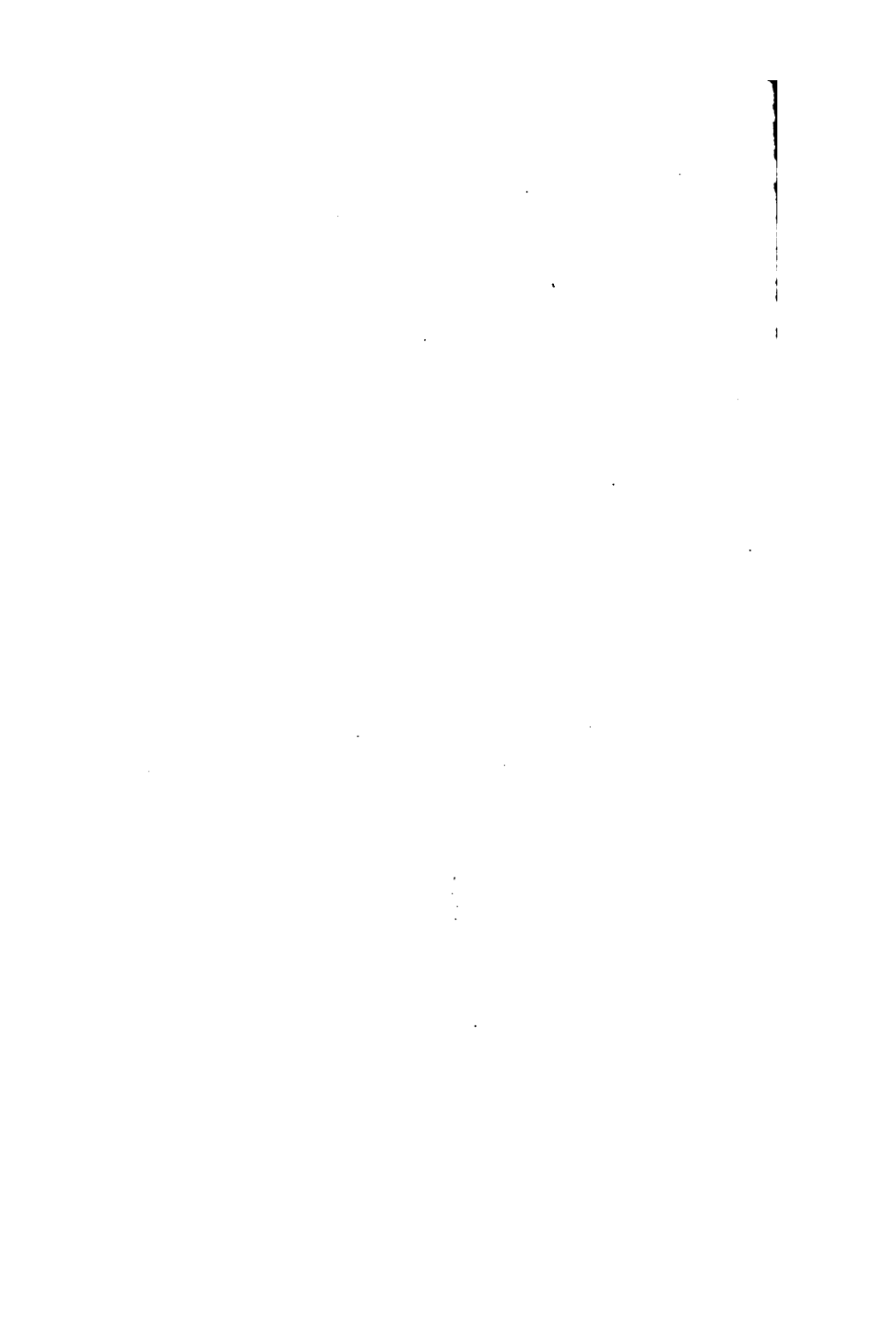
The decree procured by Diopithes, by which all question of existing opinions on theology or astronomy was made an indictable offence in the Athenian state, closes the first epoch in the history of Greek philosophy. The philosopher had hitherto been the guide and

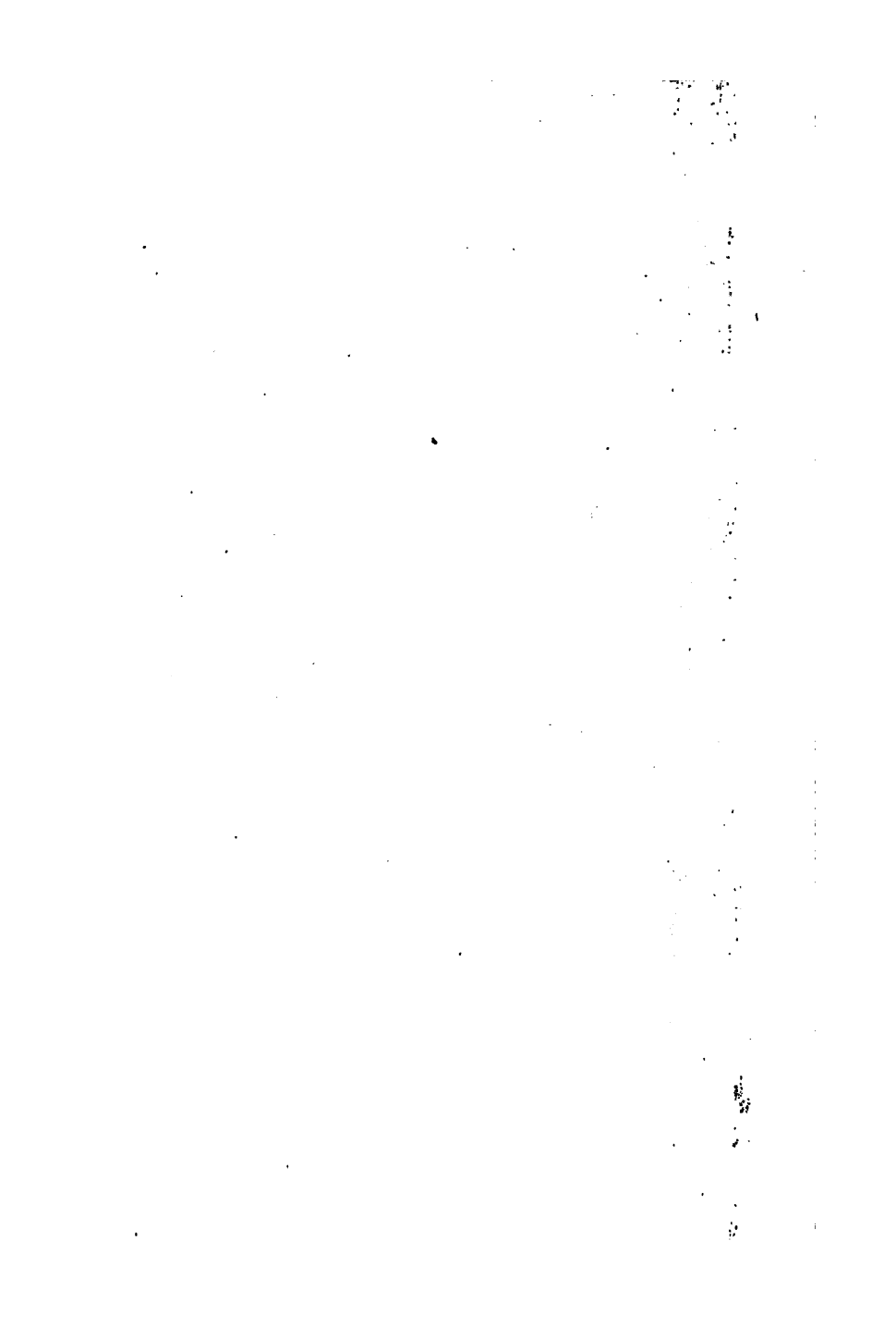
* See Plut. vit. Num.

the lawgiver ; and had been looked up to by all classes as one who deserved the highest honours. A mistaken notion, originally adopted in Egypt as it would seem, that the lower people were unfit for the knowledge of the highest truths, and that these were to be reserved for the initiated alone, was first brought into Greece by Orpheus ; and his successors too readily adopted it. The vulgar were left at the mercy of the superstition which so readily springs up in untaught minds, and the philosophic lawgiver, instead of seeking to enlighten them, received the popular faith as the foundation for his code, and placed the fetiche of the people among the things acknowledged and honoured by the laws. Not that it is possible to root up *by force* a cherished popular superstition ; that would be an insane attempt : but the ignorance which cherished it ought to have been combated, and, except by the so called tyrant Hipparchus, it was not. This bad seed bore bitter fruit : the simple religion of the heart, which was of force to influence the life when duly appealed to, gradually gave place to a mass of fable which the very *canaille* laughed at whilst they upheld ;— witness the favoured comedies of Aristophanes ; —and to a set of obscene ceremonies which

sapped the very foundations of public morals; till at last this ugly offspring of the Orphic secret doctrine grew to power enough to be a fit ally for a political faction. Henceforward we shall no longer see the philosopher as an honoured lawgiver; his next appearance will be as a fearless martyr to the truth; avowing his opinion and dying for it.

THE END.





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